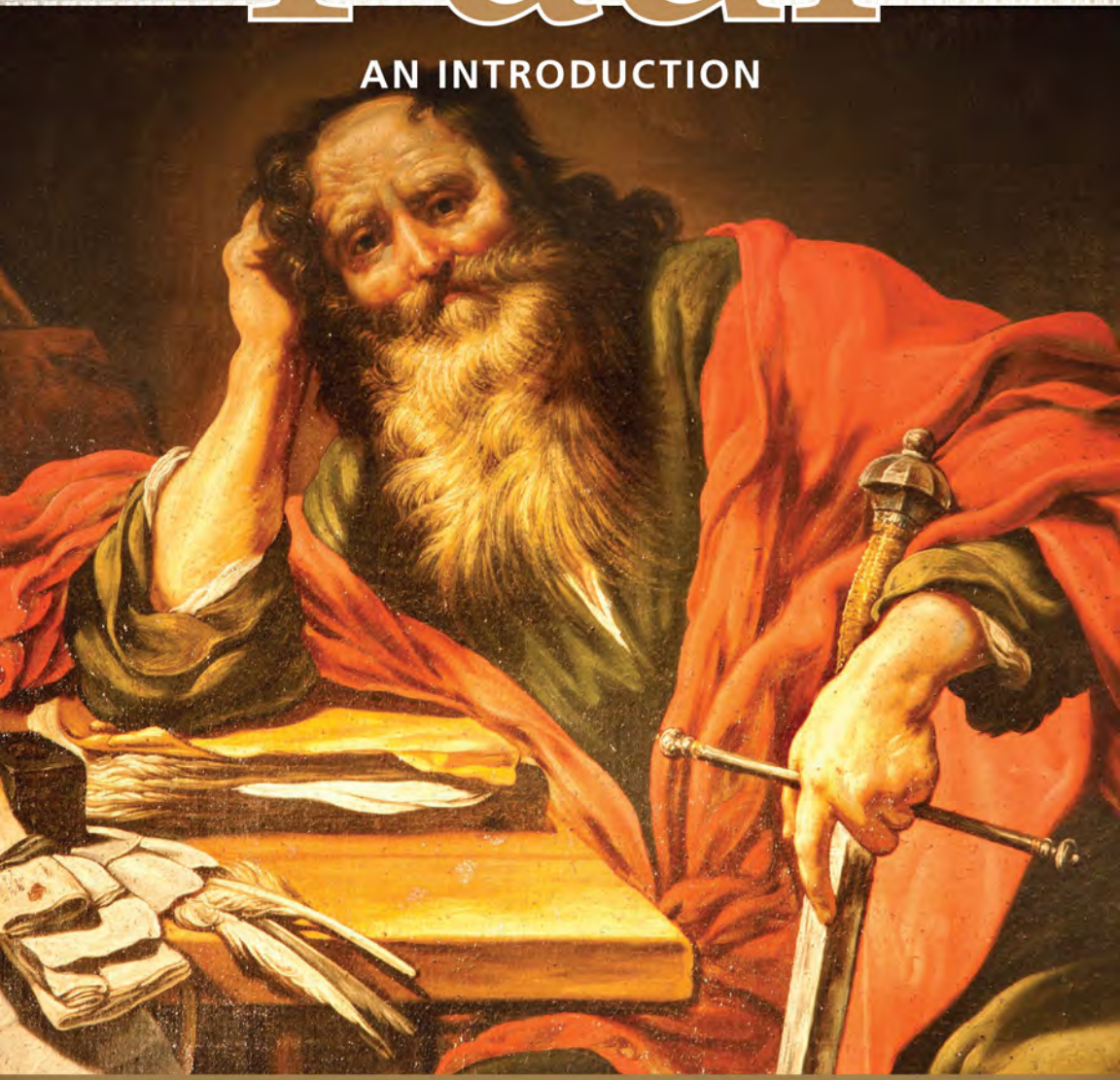
The Letters of Paul

AN INTRODUCTION



CHARLES B. PUSKAS and MARK REASONER

VISIT…

All content available from the Liturgical Press website is protected by copyright and is owned or controlled by Liturgical Press.

You may print or download to a local hard disk the e-book content for your personal and non-commercial use only equal to the number of copies purchased. Each reproduction must include the title and full copyright notice as it appears in the content.

UNAUTHORIZED COPYING, REPRODUCTION, REPUBLISHING, UPLOADING, DOWNLOADING, DISTRIBUTION, POSTING, TRANSMITTING OR DUPLICATING ANY OF THE MATERIAL IS PROHIBITED.

ISBN: 978-0-8146-8088-9

"Crisp, concise, and thorough, this volume stands out as an excellent introduction to Paul and his letters. The authors inform the reader of the historical and cultural background of the apostle and discuss the circumstances and contents of his letters, giving special attention to the rhetorical structure and function of each. Differing views are reviewed, including an evaluation of the "new perspective" on Paul, and issues in Pauline scholarship are clearly spelled out and critiqued. Packed with information, the book is a handy and efficient resource for readers looking for a reliable guide to the study of Paul's letters."

—Arland J. Hultgren
Asher O. and Carrie Nasby Professor
Emeritus of New Testament
Luther Seminary
St. Paul, Minnesota

"What a gift to college and seminary teachers introducing students to Pauline literature and the best of modern scholarship about it. The Puskas, Reasoner partnership makes for a fruitful ecumenical cooperation between Lutheran and Catholic scholarship in a style sensitive to theological concerns. The letter-by-letter approach allows students and teachers to immerse themselves in the Pauline texts and to emerge equipped to draw their own conclusions about the apostle's legacy for church and world today. This will be my textbook the next time I teach the letters of Paul."

—Paul R. Hinlicky
Tise Professor of Lutheran Studies
Roanoke College, Salem, Virginia
Docent, Evanjelicka Bohoslovecka Fakulta
Univerzita Komenskeho, Bratislava, Slovakia

"Puskas and Reasoner have written a truly fine companion text to any class or general presentation of the Pauline Corpus. They provide abundant background and reference information, review scholars' various interpretations, make careful and balanced judgments and offer detailed and clear explanations of why they opt for a given understanding. As is appropriate, their readers are allowed to draw their own conclusions."

—Robert F. O'Toole, SJ, SSD
Professor Emeritus
Pontifical Biblical Institute
Rome, Italy

"With scholarly expertise, Puskas and Reasoner meet an ambitious goal of answering the basic problems, questions and conflicts created by Paul's letters—when they were written (and by whom), the audience, and the context. Further issues such as the influence of Hellenism and Gnosticism on Paul as well as the worlds in which he lived are raised in the extensive footnotes. Everything your students need to know about one of the most passionate of Christ followers and the letters he wrote to his Gentile assemblies is ably presented!"

—Tatha Wiley
Author of *Encountering Paul: Understanding the Man and His Message,* and *Paul and the Gentile Women: Reframing Galatians*

The Letters of Paul

AN INTRODUCTION

Second Edition

Charles B. Puskas
Mark Reasoner

A Michael Glazier Book

LITURGICAL PRESS
Collegeville, Minnesota

www.litpress.org

A Michael Glazier Book published by Liturgical Press

The Letters of Paul: An Introduction by Charles B. Puskas Jr. was originally published in 1993 by Liturgical Press.

Cover design by Jodi Hendrickson. Cover illustration: Thinkstock.

Map A is reprinted from *The Works of Josephus: Complete and Unabridged*, rev. ed. (Hendrickson Publishers, 1987), 930. Permission for this image was in process at the time of printing.
Figures 1, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, and 18 are by Charles B. Puskas.
Figure 2 is by Robert Hodgson. Used by permission.
Figure 7 is by Ralph Harris. Used by permission.
Map C and figure 16 are by Craig Koester. Used by permission.
Figures 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 17, and 19 are from Wikimedia Commons and fall under fair use.
Map D created by Robert Cronen of Lucidity Information Design, LLC.

Scripture texts in this work are taken from the *New Revised Standard Version Bible* © 1989, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

© 2013 by Order of Saint Benedict, Collegeville, Minnesota. All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form, by print, microfilm, microfiche, mechanical recording, photocopying, translation, or by any other means, known or yet unknown, for any purpose except brief quotations in reviews, without the previous written permission of Liturgical Press, Saint John's Abbey, PO Box 7500, Collegeville, Minnesota 56321-7500. Printed in the United States of America.

The Library of Congress has cataloged the printed edition as follows:

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Puskas, Charles B.
The letters of Paul : an introduction / Charles B. Puskas, Mark Reasoner. — Second edition.
pages cm
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 978-0-8146-8063-6 — ISBN 978-0-8146-8088-9 (e-book)
1. Bible. Epistles of Paul—Introductions. I. Reasoner, Mark. II. Title.
BS2650.52.P87 2013
227'.061—dc23 2013024501

Contents

List of Figures vi
List of Abbreviations vii
Preface xix
Introduction xxi

1. The Worlds of Paul 3
2. The Letters of Paul in Context 28
3. A Chronology of Paul's Life 49
4. The Letter to the Romans 66
5. The Corinthian Correspondence 89
6. The Letter to the Galatians 121
7. The Letters to the Colossians and Ephesians 143
8. The Letter to the Philippians and Philemon 179
9. The Thessalonian Correspondence 200
10. The Pastoral Letters 219

Bibliography 255
Index 270

Figures

St. Paul the Apostle from Ephesus		xx
Map A	Roman Empire of the First Century	1
Fig. 1	Replica of Herodian Temple, Jerusalem	5
Fig. 2	Cave 4 at Qumran, Judea	9
Fig. 3	Head of Alexander the Great, by Leochares	16
Fig. 4	Augustus Bevilacqua	22
Fig. 5	Folio from Papyrus 46	33
Fig. 6	Apostle Paul, Russian Orthodox Icon	47
Fig. 7	Statue of the Apostle Paul, Rome	50
Map B	Journeys of St. Paul	55
Fig. 8	Arch of Titus, Roman Forum	62
Fig. 9	Denar des Nero	69
Fig. 10	Corinth, Shop and Temple	90
Fig. 11	Synagogue of Hebrews Inscription	92
Map C	Eastern Mediterranean World	100
Fig. 12	Three Menorahs, Corinth	125
Fig. 13	Road Leading from Theater to Stadium, Ephesus	158
Fig. 14	Agora of Philippi	180
Fig. 15	Via Egnatia, Philippi	181
Fig. 16	Modern Harbor of Salonika	202
Map D	Map of Roman Empire	218
Fig. 17	Apostle Paul, Russian Icon	224
Fig. 18	Icon of St. Titus, Gortys, Crete	232
Fig. 19	Apostle Paul Writing, 17th cent., oil on canvas	249

Abbreviations

Abbreviations for journals (*JBL*, *NTS*), periodicals, major reference works (*NIDB*), and series (LCL, NIGTC) follow those of *The SBL Handbook of Style: For Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical and Early Christian Studies*, edited by Patrick H. Alexander et al. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1999), and also *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 15th ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010).

Aharoni and Avi-Yonah, *Bible Atlas*	Aharoni, Y., and M. Avi-Yonah. *The Macmillan Bible Atlas*. New York: Macmillan, 1977.
ANF	*The Ante-Nicene Fathers: Translations of the Writings of the Fathers down to AD 325*. 10 vols. Edited by A. Roberts, J. Donaldson, et al. Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Company, 1884–86.
ANT	Abingdon New Testament Commentaries
Aune, *Literary Environment*	Aune, David E. *The New Testament in its Literary Environment*. LEC. Edited by Wayne Meeks. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1987.
Aune, *Literature and Rhetoric*	Aune, David E. *The Westminster Dictionary of New Testament and Early Christian Literature and Rhetoric*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2003.
Aune, *Prophecy*	Aune, David E. *Prophecy in Early Christianity and the Ancient Mediterranean World*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1983.
Austin, *Hellenistic World*	Austin, M. M. *The Hellenistic World from Alexander to the Roman Conquest: A Selection of Ancient Sources in Translation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981.
AYB	Anchor Yale Bible (formerly Anchor Bible)
AYBD	*Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*. Edited by David Noel Freedman (formerly *Anchor Bible Dictionary*).
BAFC	The Book of Acts in Its First Century Setting. Edited by Bruce W. Winter and Andrew D. Clark. 5 vols. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1993.

Barnstone, *Other Bible*	Barnstone, W., ed. *The Other Bible*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1984.
Barrett, *NT Background*	Barrett, C. K., ed. *The New Testament Background: Selected Documents*. Harper Torchbooks. New York: Harper & Row, 1961.
Bauer, *Orthodoxy*	Bauer, Walter. *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity*. Translated and edited by Robert Kraft et al. from 1934 Ger. ed. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971.
BC	*The Beginnings of Christianity Part 1. The Acts of the Apostles*. 5 vols. Edited by F. J. Foakes-Jackson. London: Macmillan and Co., 1920–33; reprint ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1979.
BDAG	Bauer, Walter, Frederick W. Danker, W. F. Arndt, and F. W. Gingrich, eds. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. Rev. and edited by F. W. Danker, 3rd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000.
Betz, *Galatians*	Betz, Hans Dieter. *Galatians: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Churches in Galatia*. Hermeneia. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979.
Biblical Criticism	*Biblical Criticism: Historical, Literary, and Textual*. Edited by Donald Guthrie and R. N. Harrison. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1978.
BJRL	*Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester*. Manchester, UK.
BJS	Brown Judaic Studies
BR	*Biblical Research: Papers of the Chicago Society of Biblical Research*.
Brown and Meier, *Antioch*	Brown, Raymond E., and John P. Meier. *Antioch and Rome: New Testament Cradles of Catholic Christianity*. New York: Paulist, 1983.
Bruce, *Acts*	Bruce, F. F. *The Book of Acts*. Rev. ed. NICNT. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1988.
BTB	*Biblical Theology Bulletin*. Jamaica, NY.
BTCB	Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible. Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press.
Bullinger, *Figures of Speech*	Bullinger, E. W. *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible Explained and Illustrated*. London, 1898; repr. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1968.

Bultmann, *Theology*	Bultmann, Rudolf. *Theology of the New Testament*. 2 vols. Translated by K. Grobel. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951, 1955.
CAH	Cook, S. A., and F. E. Adcock, et al., eds. *The Cambridge Ancient History*. Vols. 7–12. Cambridge: University Press, 1928–39.
Caird, *Language and Imagery*	Caird, George B. *The Language and Imagery of the Bible*. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1980.
Cartlidge and Dungan, *Documents*	Cartlidge, D. R., and D. L. Dungan. *Documents for the Study of the Gospels*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980.
CBET	Contributions to Biblical Exegesis & Theology. Leuven: Peeters.
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*. Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association.
CCSS	Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker.
Charlesworth, *OTP*	Charlesworth, James H., ed. *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*. 2 vols. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983, 1985.
CHB	*The Cambridge History of the Bible: From the Beginnings to Jerome*. Vol. 1. Edited by P. R. Ackroyd and C. F. Evans. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970.
CTJ	*Calvin Theological Journal*. Grand Rapids, MI: Calvin Theological Seminary.
Current Issues	*Current Issues in Biblical and Patristic Interpretation*. Edited by G. Hawthorne. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1975.
Deissmann, *LAE*	Deissmann, Adolf. *Light from the Ancient East: The New Testament Illustrated by Recently Discovered Texts of the Graeco-Roman World*. Translated by Lionel R. M. Strachan, 1927. Reprinted. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1978.
Dibelius and Conzelmann, *Pastoral Epistles*	Dibelius, Martin and Hans Conzelmann. *The Pastoral Epistles*. Translated by P. Buttolph and A. Yarbro. Hermeneia. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1972.
DJBP	*Dictionary of Judaism in the Biblical Period*. Edited by Jacob Neusner and William Scott Green. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1999.

DLNTD	*Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments*. Edited by Ralph P. Martin and Peter H. Davids. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1997.
DMBI	*Dictionary of Major Biblical Interpreters*. Edited by Donald K. McKim. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2007).
Donfried, *Romans Debate*	Donfried, Karl P., ed. *The Romans Debate*. Rev. ed. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991.
Doty, *Letters*	Doty, W. G. *Letters in Primitive Christianity*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1973.
DPL	*Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*. Edited by Gerald F. Hawthorne and Ralph P. Martin. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 1993.
DSS	*Dead Sea Scrolls*. Edited by Florentino García Martínez and Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar. *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Study Edition*. 2nd ed. 2 vols. Leiden: Brill, 1997; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999.
Dupont-Sommer, *Essene Writings*	Dupont-Sommer, A. *The Essene Writings from Qumran*. Translated by G. Vermes from the 1961 ed. Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1973.
EDEJ	*Eerdmans Dictionary of Early Judaism*. Edited by John J. Collins and Daniel C. Harlow. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010.
EGGNT	Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament
Elliott and Reasoner, *Documents and Images*	Elliott, Neil, and Mark Reasoner, eds. *Documents and Images for the Study of Paul*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2011.
Encyclopedia Judaica	*Encyclopedia Judaica*. Edited by C. Roth et al. 16 vols. Jerusalem: Keter; New York: Macmillan, 1971–72.
Eusebius, *Eccl Hist*	Eusebius Pamphilus, *Ecclesiastical History*.
ExBC	The Expositor's Bible Commentary
ExpT	*Expository Times*. London: SAGE Publications.
Farmer and Farkasfalvy, *NT Canon*	Farmer, W. R., and D. M. Farkasfalvy. *The Formation of the New Testament Canon: An Ecumenical Approach*. New York: Paulist, 1983.
Francis and Meeks, *Conflict at Colossae*	Francis, Fred O., and Wayne A. Meeks, eds. *Conflict at Colossae*. Rev. ed. SBS 4. Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1975.

GBS	Guides to Biblical Scholarship. Minneapolis: Fortress
Georgi, *Opponents*	Georgi, Dieter. *The Opponents of Paul in 2 Corinthians*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985.
GNB	Good News Bible
GNS	Good News Studies. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press.
Godwin, *Mystery Religions*	Godwin, J. *Mystery Religions in the Ancient World*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981.
Greenlee, *INT*	Greenlee, J. Harold. *Introduction to New Testament Textual Criticism*. Rev. ed. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1995.
Gunther, *Opponents*	Gunther, J. *St. Paul's Opponents and Their Background: A Study of Apocalyptic and Jewish Sectarian Teachings*. Leiden: Brill, 1973.
Guthrie, *NTIntro*	Guthrie, D. *New Testament Introduction*. 3rd ed. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1970.
Haenchen, *Acts*	Haenchen, Ernst. *The Acts of the Apostles, A Commentary*. Translated by B. Noble et al. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1971.
Handbook of Classical Rhetoric	*Handbook of Classical Rhetoric in the Hellenistic Period 330 B.C.–A.D. 400*. Edited by Stanley E. Porter. Leiden: Brill, 2001.
Hanson, *Dawn of Apocalyptic*	Hanson, Paul D. *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975.
Hays, *Echoes of Scripture*	Hays, Richard B. *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*. New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 1989.
HBD	*Harper's Bible Dictionary*. Edited by P. J. Achtemeier. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985.
Hedrick and Hodgson	*Nag Hammadi, Gnosticism, and Early Christianity*. Edited by Charles W. Hedrick, Jr., and Robert H. Hodgson. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1986.
Hellenistic Commentary	*Hellenistic Commentary to the New Testament*. Edited by M. Eugene Boring, Klaus Berger, and Carsten Colpe. Nashville: Abingdon, 1995.
Hengel, *Jesus and Paul*	Hengel, Martin. *Between Jesus and Paul*. Translated by J. Bowden. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983.
Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*	Hengel, Martin. *Judaism and Hellenism*. 2 vols. Translated by John Bowden. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974.

Hennecke, *NTA*	Hennecke, E. *New Testament Apocrypha*. 2 vols. Edited by W. Schneemelcher. Translated by R. McL. Wilson et al. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1963, 1965.
HNTC	Harper's New Testament Commentaries. New York: Harper & Row, 1957–.
Hoehner, *Chronological*	Hoehner, Harold W. *Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1977.
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard Divinity School.
HUT	Hermeneutische Untersuchungen zur Theologie. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.
ICC	The International Critical Commentary. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1895–1951; new series, 1975–.
IDB	*The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*. 4 vols. Edited by G. A. Buttrick. Nashville: Abingdon, 1962.
IDBSup	*The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible Supplementary Volume*. Edited by K. Crim. Nashville: Abingdon, 1976.
Interpretation	Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching. Louisville: Westminster John Knox.
JANT	*Jewish Annotated New Testament: New Revised Standard Version*. Edited by Amy-Jill Levine and Marc Zvi Brettler. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*. Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature.
Jewett, *Chronology*	Jewett, Robert. *A Chronology of Paul's Life*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979.
Jonas, *Gnostic Religion*	Jonas, Hans. *The Gnostic Religion*. 2nd ed. Boston: Beacon Press, 1963.
Josephus, *Ant.*; *War*	Josephus, *Antiquities*; *The Jewish War*.
JSNT	*Journal for the Study of the New Testament*
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.
JSPL	*Journal for the Study of Paul and His Letters*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns.
Käsemann, *Essays*	Käsemann, Ernst. *Essays on New Testament Themes*. Translated by W. Montague. London: SCM, 1964; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982.

Kennedy, *NT Rhetorical Criticism* (1984)	Kennedy, George A. *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984.
Klauck, *Ancient Letters*	Klauck, Hans-Josef. *Ancient Letters and the New Testament: A Guide to Context and Exegesis*. Translated and edited by Daniel P. Bailey. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2006.
Klauck, *Religious Context*	Klauck, Hans-Josef. *The Religious Context of Early Christianity: A Guide to Graeco-Roman Religions*. Translated by Brian McNeil. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003.
Koester, *Introduction*	Koester, Helmut. *Introduction to the New Testament*. 2 vols. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982.
Kümmel, *Introduction*	Kümmel, Werner Georg. *Introduction to the New Testament*. Revised English ed. Translated by H. C. Kee from 17th Ger. ed. New York/Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1975.
Kümmel, *NTHIP*	Kümmel, W. G. *The New Testament: The History of the Investigation of Its Problems*. Translated by S. MacLean Gilmour and H. C. Kee. Nashville: Abingdon, 1972.
LCBI	Literary Currents in Biblical Interpretation. Louisville: Westminster John Knox.
LCL	The Loeb Classical Library. Founded by J. Loeb. 460 vols. Edited by G. P. Goold et al. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann.
LEC	Library of Early Christianity. Edited by Wayne A. Meeks. Philadelphia: Westminster Press.
LNTS	Library of New Testament Studies. London: T&T Clark International.
Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis*	Longenecker, Richard N. *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999.
MacDonald, *Pauline Churches*	MacDonald, Margaret Y. *The Pauline Churches: A Socio-Historical Study of Institutionalization in the Pauline and Deutero-Pauline Writings*. SNTSMS 60. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.
Malina and Pilch, *Social Science Commentary* (2006)	Malina, Bruce J., and John J. Pilch. *Social-Science Commentary on the Letters of Paul*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006.

Marjanen and Luomanen, *Second-Century*	Marjanen, Antti, and Petri Luomanen, eds. *A Companion to Second-Century Christian "Heretics."* Leiden: Brill, 2008.
Meeks and Fitzgerald, *St. Paul* (2007)	Meeks, Wayne A., and John T. Fitzgerald, eds. *The Writings of St. Paul*. 2nd ed. A Norton Critical Edition. New York: Norton, 2007.
Metzger, *Textual Commentary* (1994)	Metzger, Bruce M. *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament 2nd ed. A Companion Volume to the UBS Greek NT 4th Revised Edition*. Stuttgart: German Bible Society, 1994.
Metzger, *TNT*	Metzger, B. *The Text of the New Testament*. 3rd ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 1992.
Moulton, *Grammar*	Moulton, J. H., F. W. Howard, and N. Turner. *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*. 4 vols. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1908–76.
Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul*	Murphy-O'Connor, Jerome. *Paul: A Critical Life*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.
Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul the Letter-Writer*	Murphy-O'Connor, Jerome. *Paul the Letter-Writer: His World, His Options, His Skills*. GNS 41. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1995.
Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul's Corinth*	Murphy-O'Connor, Jerome. *St. Paul's Corinth, Texts and Archaeology.* 3rd ed. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2002.
NAB	New American Bible
NCBC	New Century Bible Commentary. London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1966–.
NCCS	New Covenant Commentary Series
New Dimensions	*New Dimensions in New Testament Study*. Edited by R. N. Longenecker and M. C. Tenney. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1974.
New Documents	*New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity*. 9 vols. A Review of the Greek Inscriptions and Papyri. Edited by G. H. R. Horsely, S. R. Llewelyn, et al. The Ancient History Documentary Research Centre of Macquire University, North Ryde, N.S.W., Australia, 1981–2002; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmanns, 1998–2002.
NICNT	New International Commentary of the New Testament. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1952–.

NIDB	*The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*. Edited by Katherine Doob Sakenfeld. 5 vols. Nashville, Abingdon, 2001–9.
NIDNTT	*The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*. Edited by C. Brown. 4 vols. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1975–85.
NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1978–.
NIV	New International Version of the Bible
NJBC	*The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*. Edited by Ramond E. Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, and Roland E. Murphy. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1990.
NovTSupp	Novum Testamentum Supplements
NRSV	*New Revised Standard Version of the Bible*
NTS	*New Testament Studies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Oxford Classical Dictionary	*The Oxford Classical Dictionary*. Edited by Simon Hornblower and Anthony Spawforth. 3rd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.
PerRelSt	*Perspectives in Religious Studies*. Macon, GA.
Perrin and Duling, *NT Intro*	Perrin, Norman, and Dennis Duling. *The New Testament: An Introduction*. 2nd ed. New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1982.
Pervo, *Acts*	Pervo, Richard I. *Acts: A Commentary*. Hermeneia. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008.
PNTC	Pillar New Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.
PrC	Proclamation Commentaries, The NT Witnesses for Preaching. Edited by Gerhard Krodel. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976–.
Puskas, *Letters*	Puskas, Charles B. *The Letters of Paul: An Introduction*. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1993.
Puskas and Robbins, *INT*	Puskas, Charles B., and C. Michael Robbins. *An Introduction to the New Testament*. 2nd ed. Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2011.
1QS, 1QH	Dead Sea Scrolls, Rule of the Community, Hymns.
Robinson, *Nag Hammadi Library*	Robinson, James M., gen. ed. *The Nag Hammadi Library in English*. Translated by members of the Coptic

	Gnostic Library Project of the Institute for Antiquity and Christianity. Rev. ed. New York: Harper Collins, 1990.
Robinson and Koester, *Trajectories*	Robinson, James M., and Helmut Koester, *Trajectories Through Early Christianity*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971.
Roetzel, *Letters of Paul*	Roetzel, Calvin J. *The Letters of Paul: Conversations in Context*. 5th ed. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2009.
Ruden, *Paul among the People*	Ruden, Sarah. *Paul among the People: The Apostle Reinterpreted and Reimagined in His Own Time*. New York: Image Books, 2010.
Rudolph, *Gnosis*	Rudolph, Kurt. *Gnosis: The Nature and History of Gnosticism*. Translated by R. McL. Wilson et al. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983.
Safrai and Stern, *Jewish People*	Safrai, S., and M. Stern, et al., eds. *The Jewish People in the First Century*. Compendia Rerum Iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum. Section 1. 2 vols. Assen, Neth.: Van Gorcum; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974, 1976.
Sampley, et al., *Eph, Col*	Sampley, J. Paul, J. Burgess, G. Krodel, and R. Fuller. *Ephesians, Colossians, 2 Thessalonians, The Pastoral Epistles*. PrC. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978.
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
Schmithals, *Apocalyptic*	Schmithals, W. *The Apocalyptic Movement: Introduction and Interpretation*. Translated by J. Steely. Nashville: Abingdon, 1975.
Schmithals, *Gnosticism in Corinth*	Schmithals, W. *Gnosticism in Corinth: An Investigation of the Letters to the Corinthians*. Translated by J. Steely. Nashville: Abingdon, 1971.
Schneemelcher, *NT Apocrypha 1; 2*	Schneemelcher, Wilhelm, ed. *New Testament Apocrypha*. Rev. ed. Vol. 1, *Gospels and Related Writings*. Vol. 2, *Writings Related to the Apostles, Apocalypses, and Related Subjects*. ET, edited by R. McL. Wilson. Rev. ed. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2003.
Schürer and Vermes, *History*	Schürer, E. *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ* (175 BC–AD 135). Revised and edited by G. Vermes, F. Millar, et al. 3 vols. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1973, 1979, 1986.
SE	Studia Evangelica

Semeia	*Semeia: An Experimental Journal for Biblical Criticism*. Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1974–.
Sherwin-White, *Roman Society*	Sherwin-White, A. N. *Roman Society and Roman Law in the New Testament*. Oxford, 1963; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1978.
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Soulen, *Handbook*	Soulen, Richard N., and R. Kendell Soulen. *Handbook of Biblical Criticism*. 3rd ed. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001.
Stowers, *Diatribe*	Stowers, S. K. *The Diatribe and Paul's Letter to the Romans*. SBLDS 51. Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1981.
Tate, *Interpreting the Bible*	Tate, W. Randolph. *Interpreting the Bible: A Handbook of Terms and Methods*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2006.
TDNT	*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. 10 vols. Edited by G. Kittel and G. Friedrich. Translated by G. W. Bromiley. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans 1964–76.
Theissen, *Sociology*	Theissen, Gerd. *Sociology of Early Palestinian Christianity*. Translated by J. Bowden. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978.
TNTC	Tyndale New Testament Commentary
Towner, *Letters*	Towner, Philip H. *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*. NIC. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006.
TPI	Valley Forge, PA, and Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International.
Trebilco, *Ephesus*	Trebilco, Paul. *The Early Christians in Ephesus from Paul to Ignatius*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007.
Turner, *Style*	Turner, Nigel. *Style*. Vol. 4 (1976) of Moulton, James Hope. *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*. 4 vols. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1908–76.
USQR	*Union Seminary Quarterly Review*. New York.
Vermes, *DSS*	Vermes, Geza, ed. and trans. *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English*. New York: Penguin, 1997.
Verner, *Household of God*	Verner, David C. *The Household of God: The Social World of the Pastoral Epistles*. SBLDS 71. Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1983.

WBC	Word Biblical Commentary. Waco, TX; Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982–.
Williams, *Paul's Metaphors*	Williams, David J. *Paul's Metaphors: Their Context and Character*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1999.
Wire, *Corinthian Women Prophets*	Wire, Antoinette Clark. *Corinthian Women Prophets: A Reconstruction through Paul's Rhetoric*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990.
Witherington, *Acts*	Witherington, Ben, III. *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997.
WJK	Louisville: Westminster John Knox Publishers
Women in Scripture (2000)	*Women in Scripture: A Dictionary of Named and Unnamed Women in the Hebrew Bible, The Aprocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books, and the New Testament*. Edited by Carol Meyers, Toni Craven, and Ross S. Kraemer. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000.
Women's Bible Commentary (2012)	*Women's Bible Commentary*. Rev. and updated. Edited by Carol A. Newsom, Sharon H. Ringe, and Jacqueline E. Lapslely. Louisville: WJK, 2012.
Wright, *Climax of the Covenant*	Wright, N. T. *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992.
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.

Preface

This book is the second edition of the 1993 publication of the same title authored by Charles B. Puskas, Jr. Now Mark Reasoner is co-author with Charles in the new edition. More than 40 percent of the material has been revised. A host of diverse cultural, historical, socio-rhetorical, literary, and contextual studies have surfaced and we have noted them when they are relevant to our study. The "assured results of academic scholarship" from the past century regarding the issues of, for example, authorship, date, historical situation, literary form, and rhetorical structure have been critically reexamined in almost every chapter, as a result of the informed queries and brilliant suggestions from Professor Reasoner, who has numerous publications in Pauline studies. Mark read through the entire first edition, recommending a canonical arrangement of the book's contents, composing chapter 1 (with some input from Charles), supplying new titles for the two opening chapters, and offering a host of insights on ancient sources and current studies. Charles checked all references, defined key terms, and added more primary and secondary material. This fruitful collaboration has contributed significantly to the addressing of new, pressing issues, filling certain lacunae, and updating the book for a new generation of readers.

Attentive to the endorsers of the first edition, we have continued to address "the basic questions of each Pauline letter" and provide "the background and literary information necessary for the reader to see for then as well as now." We hope that it will continue to be "a fine companion to any theological exposition of these letters" (Robert F. O'Toole, SJ, on the inside back cover). "The book contains useful structures of rhetorical criticism, and valuable comparisons of the Deutero-Paulines and the undisputed letters of Paul" (Calvin J. Roetzel, inside back cover). Many thanks to Hans Christoffersen, publisher at Liturgical Press, who encouraged this second edition, and to our wives, Susan Puskas and Wendy Reasoner, to whom this work is affectionately dedicated.

A 4th-century icon of St. Paul the Apostle from Ephesus.

Introduction

The apostle Paul, spirited letter writer, preacher, and missionary to the Gentiles, has been a figure of controversy and misunderstanding from the beginning. Although he admits that in his earlier Jewish life he was "violently persecuting the church of God" and was "zealous for the traditions of my ancestors" (Gal 1:13, 14), Paul was convinced that God had "set [him] apart before [he] was born . . . to reveal his Son" to him so that he might proclaim Christ, God's Son, among the Gentiles (1:15). He opens many of his letters with "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ" (e.g., 1 Cor 1:1; 2 Cor 1:1). An apostle is one who has seen the risen Lord as Paul claims to have done (1 Cor 15:8; Gal 1:15-16), yet it is clear that some challenged Paul's apostleship (1 Cor 9:2; 2 Cor 11). Even Acts seems ambiguous. It provides a stricter criterion near the beginning of its narrative (1:12-22), a witness to Jesus' ministry from his baptism, which appears to disqualify Paul. Later in the narrative, Paul seems excluded from "the apostles and the elders" (15:2), even though he and Barnabas are called "apostles" in one section (14:4, 14).[1]

Although Marcion of Pontus (150 CE) believed him to be the only true apostle, and others saw Paul as the model ascetic (*Acts of Paul and Thecla*, 200 CE), certain Jewish-Christians regarded him as a false apostle and a despiser of God's laws (*Kerygmata Petrou*, third cent.). Many Gnostic Christians revered Paul and highlighted those aspects of his teaching (e.g., Rom 7:18, 24; 8:9) that resonated with their own beliefs. In the fourth century, John Chrysostom admonished his people to imitate Paul, "this archetype of virtue," and Augustine of Hippo became a Christian after reading a passage from Paul's Letter to the Romans. Martin Luther, the sixteenth-century Protestant

[1] See discussion in Terence Donaldson, "Apostle," *NIDB* 1:205–7. "Paul" (Gk. *Paulos*) is his Roman surname (e.g., Rom 1:1; 1 Cor 1:1; Acts 13-28). Acts is the only NT book that calls him by his Hebrew name "Saul" (Gk. *Saoul*, e.g., Acts 9:4; 22:7; 26:14, more often *Saulos*, e.g., Acts 7:58; 8:1; 9:1, 8; 11:25; 12:25; 13:1f, 9), see *BDAG*, 789, 913, 917.

Reformer, believed that Paul was God's apostle of the gospel of grace and the champion of Christian freedom from the law. In the modern era, philosopher Frederick Nietzsche (a Lutheran pastor's son) called him the Jewish preacher of bad news, while the agnostic playwright George Bernard Shaw accused Paul of making a monstrous imposition upon Jesus. In 1922, the Swiss pastor Karl Barth challenged the liberal theology of his day with a bold exposition of Paul's Letter to the Romans. Today there are many new perspectives on Paul with, for example, Jewish and Christian scholars reexamining what Paul has to say about Israel and early Christianity, and feminist critics raising questions about Paul's views on the roles and relationships of men and women in his congregations.[2] Postmodern philosophy has also reflected upon the enigmatic writings of the apostle.[3]

How we understand the apostle depends on our interpretation of his writings. Beginning with Romans, thirteen letters are ascribed to him, with Hebrews having a close relationship to the collection.[4]

Paul's letters provide some information about his life and background. He refers to himself as a Hebrew of Hebrew origins and a Pharisee in his interpretation of the Jewish law, the Torah (Phil 3:5; Rom 11:1; Gal 1:14). He often quotes and alludes to the Hebrew

[2] Most of the sources in this paragraph, ancient and modern, are conveniently located in Meeks and Fitzgerald, *St. Paul* (2007). Many, especially the ancient sources, will be discussed further in our book (see also our index).

[3] See, e.g., Giorgio Agamben, *The Time That Remains: A Commentary on the Letter to the Romans*, trans. Patricia Dailey (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005); Alain Badiou, *Saint Paul: The Foundation of Universalism*, trans. Ray Brassier (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003); John Milbank, "Paul against Biopolitics," in John Milbank, Slavoj Žižek, and Creston Davis, *Paul's New Movement: Continental Philosophy and the Future of Christian Theology* (Brazos, 2010), 21–73; Jacob Taubes, *The Political Theology of Paul*, trans. Dana Hollander (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004); Slavoj Žižek, *The Puppet and the Dwarf: The Perverse Core of Christianity* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003). Secondary literature on the phenomenon of Paul in continental philosophy includes John Caputo and Linda Martín Alcoff, eds., *St. Paul among the Philosophers* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2009); Douglas Harink, ed., *Paul, Philosophy and the Theopolitical Vision: Critical Engagements with Agamben, Badiou, Žižek and Others* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2010).

[4] Lee M. McDonald and James A. Sanders, *The Canon Debate* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002), 284–85, 503–4.

Scriptures, but mostly in a widely used Greek translation. He is also immersed in the Hellenistic culture and thought of his day, an ingenious debater, and rigorous traveler to many towns and cities of the Roman-occupied world. He calls himself an apostle of Jesus Christ and proclaims his good news with the passion and urgency of one who has experienced its liberating power. He quarrels with his opponents, shows deep concern for the churches founded by him or affiliated with his ministry, and pleads for mutual understanding among Jews and Gentiles.

This book attempts to expose readers to the life and thought of Paul with a letter-by-letter introduction to his writings. It seeks to acquaint them with some of the basic issues: who really wrote each letter, when it was written, the letter's social context, audience, and literary characteristics. The book also includes discussion on the worlds of Paul, an overview of the letter genre, a chronology of Paul, and the suggested rhetorical arrangement of each letter. This new edition of the book follows a canonical order with two exceptions. First, Philemon is discussed earlier with Philippians because both are identified as "Prison Epistles," and thus the Pastoral Letters are placed at the end. Second, Colossians and Ephesians are grouped together because they share similar content, and most discussions of authorship, dating, and context are relevant to both.[5]

This book is intended to be a helpful reference tool as well as textbook. Many introductions to Paul ignore or abbreviate discussions of authorship, sources, and literary integrity. Knowledge of these usually unresolved issues is important for understanding Paul's letters, reading biblical commentaries, and doing research. The rhetorical outlines of Paul's letters are an attempt to lay bare the Hellenistic context of his letter writing, while at the same time allowing for Paul's idiosyncrasies of style and his specific missionary contexts.

Because the focus of this book is on the contents and origins of each Pauline writing as a unit, only those issues and texts will be examined that relate to the book as a whole or its history of composition. Further discussion and resources for understanding Paul's theology, apocalyptic

[5] For lists and catalogues of the New Testament Collections, noting similarities and differences in the arrangement of Paul's letters, see *idem*, *Canon Debate*, appendix D.

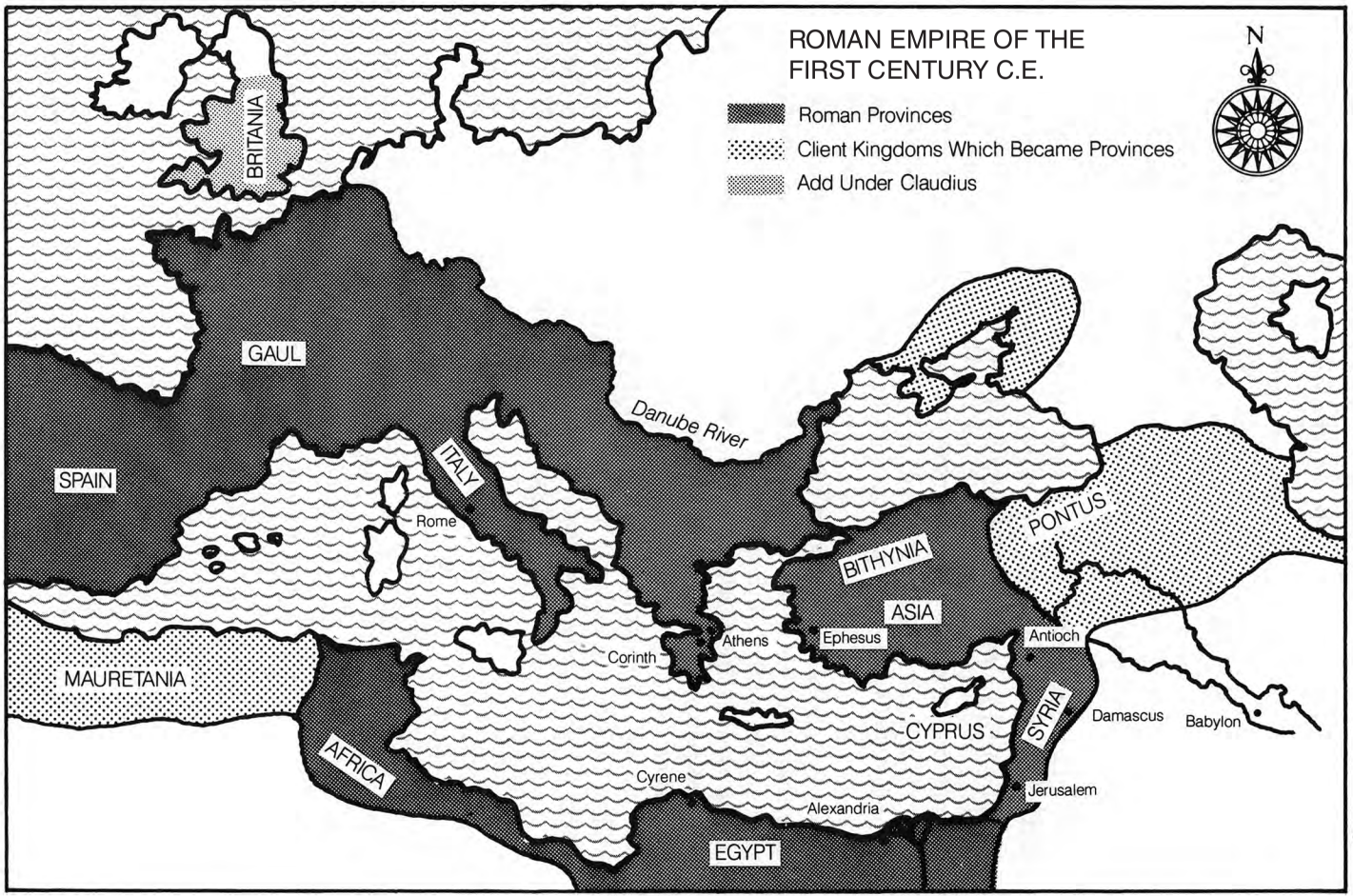
perspectives, views on Jewish and Gentile relations, and his social and cultural context will be provided in the footnotes and bibliography.

Paul's letters open windows beyond the limits of human understanding, for he finds the mysteries of God's ways mysterious and overwhelming.

> O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! (Rom 11:33)

Despite the challenge of reading these letters and reflecting on the vistas they provide of the mysteries of God, may we read and reflect with the boldness and energy of the same author who wrote:

> Do you not know that in a race the runners all compete, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win it. (1 Cor 9:24)



Map A: Roman Empire of the First Century

CHAPTER 1

The Worlds of Paul

Contextualizing Paul in his life and times is essential in order to better understand his writings and to prevent the common error of creating the apostle in our own image. So at the outset, it is appropriate to raise some questions to address and explain some terminology. How Jewish was this Hellenistic missionary to the Gentiles who proclaimed to them a salvation by grace alone? How did the Torah (Mosaic Law) function in Paul's life and work? As a Hellenistic Jew, how conversant was he with the culture of his broader Greco-Roman world? What was Paul's attitude toward Rome and how did he live under Roman domination? What was wrong with Paul's worlds to necessitate his Christ-called mission to the Gentiles?

Paul's Jewish World

Paul the apostle,[1] as he presents himself to his readers in his letters,

[1] "Paul" (Gk. *Paulus*) is his Roman surname (e.g., Rom 1:1; 1 Cor 1:1; Acts 13:9–28:25). Acts is the only NT book that calls him by his Hebrew name "Saul" (Gk. *Saoul*, Acts 9:4, 17; 22:7, 13; 26:14, usually *Saulos*, Acts 7:58; 8:1, 3; 9:1, 8, 11, 22, 24; 11:25, 30; 12:25; 13:1-2, 7, 9), see *BDAG*, 789, 913, 917. Paul's apostolic office rests on the call of God (as a prophet; e.g., Jer 1:5; Isa 49:1) rather than on human agencies or charismatic decision. Greek *apostolos*, "sent one," in Rom 1:1, 5; 16:7; 1 Cor 1:1; 15:9; Gal 1:1, 15f.; Isa 6:8; 61:1 LXX (Septuagint); Cynic philosopher as a messenger sent (Gk. *apestaltai*) from god, Arrian, *Disc. Epictetus* 3.22f., 45f.; see also, Heb. *Shaliach*, a messenger sent to proclaim, *m. Rosh Hash*. 1.3; a representative, *m. Ber*. 5.5. An apostle is one who has seen the risen Lord as Paul claims to have done (1 Cor 15:8; Gal 1:15-16), yet it is clear that some challenged Paul's apostleship (1 Cor 9:2; 2 Cor 11). See discussion in Terence Donaldson, "Apostle," *NIDB* 1:205–7;

inhabits a Jewish or Judean world.[2] For Paul this means that he recognizes the value of the covenants that God has made with Israel as found in the law, prophets, and psalms. It also means that he holds to some notion of "the merit of the fathers," the cumulative benefit that accrues to Jews because of their holy ancestors. Paul describes himself "as to the law, a Pharisee" (Phil 3:5; later, Acts 5:34; 23:6; 26:5)[3] representing a Jewish/Judean group devoted to the study of the oral and written law,[4] which would dominate Judaism after 70 CE.

Walter Schmithals, *The Office of Apostle in the Early Church* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1969). See also http://www.thepaulpage.com/.

[2] In the NT, "Jews" (Gk. *Ioudiaoi*) refers to Judeans of the Israelite faith (e.g., Josephus, *Ant*. 11.173). The region of Judea is also the location of Jerusalem where the standard of Israelite faith was established, see Malina and Pilch, *Social Science Commentary* (2006), 371–74. There are contexts, however, where the religious (or cultural) term "Jews" is preferred over the ethnic-geographical "Judean" (Josephus, *Ant*. 20.38-39; 2 Macc 6:6) cited in A.-J. Levine, *The Misunderstood Jew* (San Francisco: Harper, 2006), 161–62. There are also modern Jewish concerns about too readily replacing "Jews" with "Judeans" in the NT as a subtle (anti-Semitic?) attempt to undermine any sense of continuity in Jewish history, Joshua D. Garroway, "*Ioudiaos,*" in *JANT*, 524–25. Nevertheless, Shaye D. Cohen supports "Judean" (ethnic-geographical) over "Jew" (religious term) for *Ioudaios* in the NT; see *EDEJ*, 769–70.

[3] Pharisees probably derived from the Hebrew *perushim*, "the separated ones." Although it may have been a pejorative nickname, "Persian" (Aramaic *Parsh'ah*), because they shared certain Persian beliefs (e.g., resurrection, angels vs. demons) found also in the law, prophets, and writings. Their intense devotion to the law makes them the spiritual descendants of the Hasidim ("pious ones") who joined the Maccabean revolt to oppose religious persecution of "the Jews" under the Syrian Greeks (1 Macc 2:42). For primary sources, see Josephus, *Ant*. 13.288–98; 13.408–15; 17.41–45 (their politics, popularity, and adherence to the traditions of the fathers); 13.171–73 (divine will is balanced with human freedom); 18.12–15 (their moderate lifestyle, belief in immortality of the soul and final rewards or punishments); *War* 1.110–12 (their piety, precise interpretation of the law, and political influence); *Life* 191–92 (their accurate knowledge of Judean law); Matt 23 (a critique of their religious zeal and legalism). See Steve Mason, *Flavius Josephus on the Pharisees* (Leiden: Brill, 1991); R. Deines, "Pharisees," *EDEJ*, 1061–63.

[4] Torah ("instruction, teaching") is primarily the first five "books of Moses." The Pentateuch ("five scrolls") consists of: (1) Genesis (esp. Noah and Abraham), (2) Exodus, (3) Leviticus, (4) Numbers (at Sinai, Exod 19–Num

Fig. 1: Replica of Herodian Temple, Jerusalem (18 BCE to 70 CE), reconstructed by Y. Aharoni and displayed at the Holyland Hotel, Jerusalem. Photo by C. B. Puskas.

The Covenants

Paul specifically mentions the covenants[5] as a special possession of the Jewish people in Romans 9:4. One could easily argue that the "gifts

---

10), (5) Deuteronomy (at Moab, Num 11–Deut); also called written Torah with its complement the oral Torah or those oral traditions from first century CE (and earlier), eventually written in the Mishnah ("repetition," from 200 CE) and later Talmud ("instruction," 500–600 CE, which includes Mishnah text and Gemara commentary). See "Torah and Tradition" in *EDEJ*, 1316–17. See online Mishnah and Tosefta (Danby trans.) http://www.sacred-texts.com/jud/tsa/index.htm and Talmud (Soncino ed.) http://www.come-and-hear.com/tcontents.html. Some of the teaching of the Mishnah and Talmud, which can be traced back to the so-called Tannaitic period (200 BCE–200 CE), is from Pharisaic schools. See J. Neusner, *Rabbinic Traditions about Pharisees before 70 CE*, 3 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1971).

[5] A covenant (Heb. *berit*; Gk. *diathēkē*) is a solemn pact or agreement between two parties—e.g., a king with his vassals. On the Noahic, Abrahamic, and Sinai (Mosaic) covenants, see "covenant" in *EDEJ*, 491–94, and *DJBP*, 136–67, 456. The Noahic covenant (Gen 9) was later developed into Noahidic commandments to govern relations between Israelties and non-Israelites (Tosefta *'Abodah Zarah* 8.4–8, second–third centuries CE). They consist of prohibitions against idolatry, adultery, and incest, bloodshed, blasphemy, robbery,

and calling" in Romans 11:29, which Paul describes as "irrevocable," also include the covenants that God has made with Israel. Paul thus affirms that the Jewish people remain God's chosen people, or first love.

Abrahamic Covenant. The covenant that God made with Abraham (Gen 12:1-8; 15) is like the northern star in Paul's letters, since his argumentation in different letters is oriented around this covenant.[6] In Galatians 3 and in Romans 4, Paul treats the Abrahamic covenant as the primary pattern for how God relates with those who follow him. In the former text, he simply argues that because Abram responded in faith to this covenant, the precedent is established that faith is how one appropriates God's promises. For Paul, this precedent means that faith is more significant than the works of the Mosaic Law (Exod 19:3-5). This means that Paul plays the Abrahamic covenant off against the Mosaic covenant and argues that the gospel he preaches to the Gentiles (Gk. *ethnoi*, nations, non-Judean) is consistent with the Abrahamic covenant. In Romans 4 he improves on the argument by anticipating and countering a possible objection. Since the Abrahamic covenant does include the command to circumcise all males in the covenant,[7]

---

social injustice, and eating flesh cut from a living animal. It was believed that God gave certain pre-Sinaitic laws equally to all people, laws that form the ethical basis of Israelite dealings with the nations. They find some precedence in Lev 18–20 (laws for aliens); Wis 14; *Jub*. 7; Matt 5:21-48; 19:3-9; Acts 15:19-21; 21:25; Rom 1:23-27; 1 Cor 5–10. See Markus Bockmuehl, *Jewish Law in Gentile Churches: Halakah and the Beginnings of Christian Public Ethics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2003), 150–73. Heb. *Halakah* denotes "way; more generally," "Jewish law, legal material," in both oral and written forms, developed by the Pharisees and rabbinic Judaism.

[6] See William B. Barcley, "The Law and Promise: God's Covenant with Abraham in Pauline Perspective," in *Perspectives on Our Father Abraham*, ed. Steven A. Hunt (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010), 138–52; see also Jeffrey S. Siker, *Disinheriting the Jews: Abraham in Early Christian Controversy* (WJK, 1991).

[7] Circumcision is a sign of the covenant between God and Israel (Gen 17:9-14) to be carried out on the eighth day of a boy's life (Gen 17:12; 21:4; Lev 12:3); only those males who are circumcised may partake of the paschal feast (Exod 12:43-49). By the Hellenistic period, it was an important Jewish identity marker (1 Macc 1:13-15, 48; Josephus, *Ant*. 12.241; 20.43–48; later *m*. *Šabb*. 18–19). See Shaye Cohen, "'Those Who Say They Are Jews and Are Not': How Do You Know a Jew in Antiquity When You See One?" in *Diasporas*

Paul notes that Abram receives God's commendation as "righteous" (Gk. *dikaios*) because of his faith (Gen 15:6), *before* he receives the circumcision command (Gen 17:10-14; Rom 4:10-12). His argument assumes that what is narrated earlier in Genesis preceded what is narrated later, that God's word to Abram in chapter 15 preceded God's command for his circumcision in chapter 17. Paul, however, excludes the mention of Abraham's meritorious deeds blessed by Melchizedek as early as Genesis 14!

For Paul, the Abrahamic covenant remains in effect for all who believe (Gal 3:7-9; Rom 4:9-12).[8] By contrast, Paul can describe the Mosaic covenant, sometimes referred to simply as "the law," as a temporary measure (Gal 3:23-25). The letter of Galatians is written to support Paul's gospel of freedom proclaimed to the Gentiles and God-fearers.[9] Paul is opposed to non-Judeans submitting to the Mosaic requirements of "getting in" and "staying in" the family of God (i.e., circumcision of males, keeping Sabbath and food laws, Gal 4:10f.; 5:2).[10]

---

in Antiquity, eds. Shaye Cohen and Ernest Frerichs, BJS 288 (Atlanta: Scholars, 1993), 1–46.

[8] According to N. T. Wright, the Abrahamic covenant in Romans 4 and Galatians 3 envisions a worldwide family, characterized by faith in Jesus Christ; the law holds temporary sway until the coming of Christ, Abraham's "seed," in *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 167.

[9] God-fearers were non-Judeans attracted to the Israelite faith but who had not undergone proselyte conversion; they were often patrons of a local synagogue (i.e., Jewish assembly for Scripture readings, sermons, and prayer) located in Judea and scattered about (Gk. *diaspora*) the Mediterranean world. For "god-fearers" see *EDEJ*, 681–82; on "diaspora" and "synagogue" see *DJBP*, 165–66, 606–10.

[10] Paul was commissioned to proclaim Christ among the Gentiles (Gal 1:16: 2:7, 9; Rom 11:13; 15:16; cf. Acts 9:15; 28:28). For many Jews/Israelites, Paul's mission to the Gentiles threatened Jewish covenant identity and distinctiveness (e.g., Isa 43:3-4; 1 Macc 1:11-15; cf. Gal 1:11f.; Acts 21:28), despite passages in the Jewish Scriptures cited by early Christians regarding God's inclusiveness and openness to non-Jews/non-Judeans (e.g., Gen 12:1-3; Isa 42:6; 49:6; 56:6-8; Acts 13:46f.). See Jewish concerns, citing examples of divine judgment on the nations (Isa 40:17; 43:3f.; 60:1ff.) in Joel S. Kaminsky, *Yet I Loved Jacob: Reclaiming the Biblical Concept of Election* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2007), 140–52, 216–19. Nevertheless, some Jews/Israelites

Did Paul, as a native-born son of Israel, continue to maintain his faith by obeying God's Torah? In his own lifestyle, it sounds like Paul follows Mosaic Law only when it is expedient for him to make a good impression on other Israelites/Jews (1 Cor 9:20). Would Paul pretend to be something he is not in order to persuade people under false pretenses to embrace the gospel? The later portrait of Paul taking a vow at the temple in Jerusalem might be an example of Paul's following the Mosaic Law when it is useful for him, though some who wish to portray Paul as consistently Torah-observant would not regard this behavior as a matter of expediency (Acts 16:3; 18:18; 21:20-26).[11] This issue might be clarified with other questions. With what group was Paul embedded and with whom was his identity defined?

Mosaic Covenant. Paul readily admits that Torah (Gen–Deut) is holy, just, and good (Rom 7:12), has distinguished Israel as a light to the nations (2:17-24; 3:2), and is summed up in the love of neighbor (Gal 5:14; cf. Lev 19:8; *b. Šabb*. 31a). How is it, then, that Paul, who acknowledges himself to be a true son of Israel, a Pharisee who is blameless in his Torah observance (Phil 3:5-6; Gal 1:14; Rom 11:1), can regard these benefits as "rubbish" to gain Christ (Phil 2:8)? In discussing his adaptable missionary strategy to Jews and Gentiles, he also writes "though I myself am not under the law" (1 Cor 9:20). What does he mean here?

In Romans 3–4, Paul indicates three progressive functions of the law[12]: (1) Torah reveals God's will for Israel (cf. Deut 30:11-14) and

---

engaged in the proselytizing of non-Jews/non-Judeans (*Num. Rab*. 8.3; *b. Yebam* 47a-b; cf. Matt 23:15).

Circumcision was discussed in an earlier note on the Abrahamic covenant. On Sabbath observance, see Gen 2:1-3; Exod 20:8-11; Deut 5:12-15; Isa 58:13; Ezek 20:12; CD 10.15–11.22 (in Vermes, *DSS*, 139f.); Acts 1:12; 13:14; 15:21; 1 Macc 2:39-41; *m. Šabb*. 1–4; 7.1–2; 19.2–5; 23.1–3. On food laws (Heb. *kashrut*) see Dan 1:8-16; Tob 1:10-12; 1 Macc 1:62-63; 4 Macc 5:25-29; Gal 2:12; *m. 'Abod. Zar*. 2.3–5, 6. All are vital for Jewish identity and faithful living. See *DJBP*, 166 (dietary laws), 538f. (sabbath). See also George J. Brooke, "Dead Sea Scrolls," *NIDB* 2:50.

[11] See discussion on the expediency behind the portrayal of Paul's Torah-observance, in Pervo, *Acts*, 388f., 544–45. Shira Lander sees Paul's Torah observance as consistent with his Jewish heritage in *JANT*, 241, 301–2.

[12] Derived from Richard B. Hays, "Three Dramatic Roles: The Law in Romans 3–4," in *Paul and Mosaic Law*, ed. James D. G. Dunn (Grand Rapids,

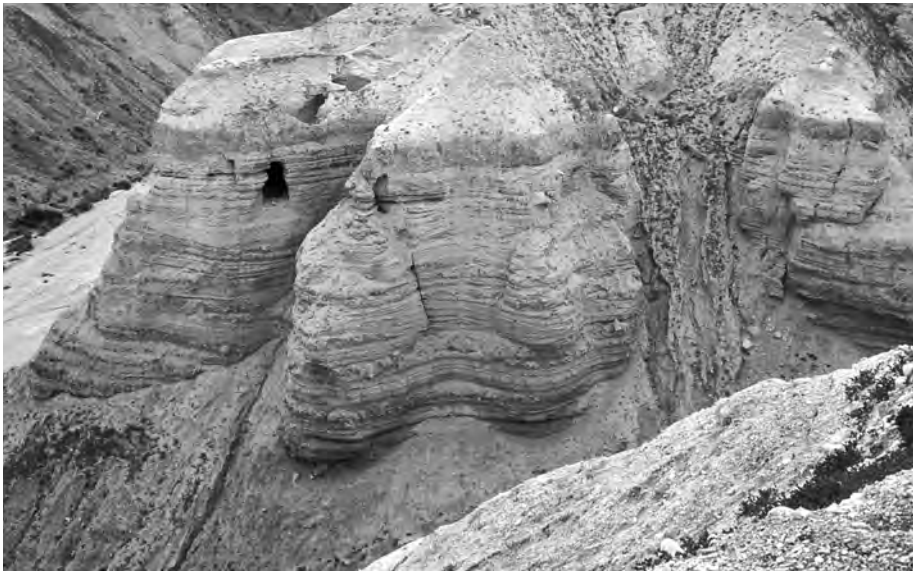


Fig. 2: Cave 4 at Qumran, Judea, where many of the Dead Sea Scrolls (third century BCE to first century CE) were discovered. Photo by R. Hodgson.

sets them apart as a people (cf. Isa 49:6; Rom 2:17-21, 23; 9:4f.); (2) Torah pronounces condemnation (Rom 3:19-20; Ps 14:3; Eccl 7:20; Isa 59:7-8); and (3) Torah bears witness to God's righteousness through Christ (Rom 3:21-26; 10:4; Ps 97:2-3 LXX; Isa 51:4-5). Paul views the coming of Christ as an end-time event (Gal 4:4; cf. Mark 1:15), freeing the believer from sin and the curse of the law for sin (Gal 3:13-14; 4:4-6; Rom 8:1-4).[13] As a result, the Christ event transforms

---

MI: Eerdmans, 2001), 151–64. N.B.: Ps 97 LXX is the Greek Septuagint translation of Psalm 97, which is Psalm 98 in our English translations from the Hebrew text; see Leonard Greenspan, "Septuagint," *NIDB*, 5:168.

[13] Some Jews even predicted that the commandments would be rendered obsolete in the end-time. For example, on permitting the mixing of wool and linen (contra Lev 19:19c) for the shroud of a corpse, "R. Joseph observed: This implies that the commandments will be abolished in the Hereafter" (i.e., resurrection, in *b. Nid.* 61b, Soncino ed.). On the end-time advent/arrival of the Messiah, see Dan 7:13; *1 En.* 38; *As. Mos.* 10; *4Q*285; Rom 16:25f.; 1 Cor 15:20f.; *b. Ketub.* 111a; *b. Sanh.* 97b. See J. Hollemann, *Resurrection and Parousia*, NovT Supp 84 (Leiden: Brill, 1996). It is from the perspective

the exclusively Jewish Torah covenant into a *Gentile inclusive* law of Christ (Rom 10:4; 1 Cor 9:21; Gal 6:2). The death and resurrection of Christ provides Paul with this new hermeneutical perspective. Paul identifies with those who share this new outlook in both conviction and practice.

A right standing with God to which the law (and prophets) bear witness is obtained by believing/trusting in what God has done in Christ Jesus (Rom 3:21-24; 4:1-3). The life of faithfulness in Christ is the way people connect to God in Paul's gospel.

For Paul, faith has come in "the fullness of time" and now people "are known by God" through faith in Christ who came "to liberate" them (*exagorazō*, Gal 3:23; 4:4-6, 9).

Paul's prioritizing of faith over works was met with criticism. James 2:14-26 seems to correct Paul's view on the matter or some misinterpretation of it.[14] Here, it is argued, Abraham is justified by works in his willingness to sacrifice Isaac (Gen 22) and his faith in God was brought to completion in works (Jas 2:21-24). For many Jews, obedience to Mosaic Law is regarded as a way of living one's faith. For many it was a grateful response to the gracious God of Israel who liberated them from Egypt and gave them the Torah (Exod 19:3-6; 20:2-6). Paul, of course, enjoins his followers to right courses of action (e.g., Rom 6; 12; Gal 5–6; 1 Thess 4–5), but it is an ongoing question how his

---

of this end-time Christ event that Paul can proclaim a "new covenant" (1 Cor 11:25/Jer 38:31, LXX; cf. Luke 22:20; 2 Cor 3:6) and "new creation" (2 Cor 5:17; Gal 6:15; cf. Isa 43:19). See the notion of Paul's "freedom from the law," developed in two different postmodern perspectives. French philosopher Alain Badiou sees Paul against the law in his vision of love as *universal* power, *Saint Paul: The Foundation of Universalism*, trans. R. Brassier (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003), 75–92. In contrast, Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben (Verona) regards Paul's letters as not concerned with the foundation of universal religion but the *messianic* abolition of the Jewish law, *The Time That Remains: A Commentary on the Letter to Romans*, trans. P. Dailey (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005), 47–58, 98–124.

[14] See the literature and discussion in Scot McKnight, *The Letter of James*, NICNT (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011), 224–63. If the letter was authored by James the brother of Jesus (Gal 1:19; 2:9; Acts 15; 21:17-26), as McKnight contends (23–34), it only heightens this disagreement in early Christianity.

subordination of works integrates with a meaningful ethic (e.g., Rom 2:13; Gal 5:6, 14; 6:6).[15]

Who were the focus of Paul's attacks and why? In Galatians, it seems to be those who would require of *Gentile* believers proselyte conversion (e.g., by circumcision) to "get in" and Torah maintenance (e.g., observing food laws and the Sabbath) to "stay in" God's family (2 Esdr 9:7; 2 Bar 51:3; Acts 15:1; Josephus, *Antiq*. 20.42-48; *b.Yebam*. 46a). Even general statements like Galatians 2:16 (cf. Ps 143:2) seem to secure this argument with his Galatian addressees. In Romans, however, Paul does not exclude those who "got in" as native-born children of the covenant and who now "stay in" through Torah observance. He challenges the boasting of their privileged status and their Israelite ethnocentricity (Rom 2:1-11; 3:27f.; cf. Wis 15:2-3). Those who receive the divine acceptance of privileged persons *believe/have faith* in God's activity on their behalf (Rom 3:30; 4:11-12).[16] The question needs to be asked: was Paul a radical reformer of Judaism or a Christ-centered missionary to the Gentiles?[17]

Davidic Covenant. Paul does not write as explicitly about the Davidic covenant (2 Sam 7) as he does the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants. But in his composite quotation of Old Testament texts in Romans 15:9-12, there is a text from Isaiah that refers to a Davidic king ruling over the nations (Isa 11:10; in Rom 15:12). In addition, the title "Christ," which is the Greek form of the Hebrew term "messiah," includes in it the ideology of a Davidic descendant who is specially

[15] See for example, Michael F. Bird, ed., *Four Views on The Apostle Paul* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 164, 196f., 205. See also Bockmuehl, *Jewish Law in Gentile Churches*, 150–73.

[16] See Bruce Malina and John Pilch, *Social Science Commentary on the Letters of Paul* (Augsburg Books, 2006), 240. On *dikaiosunē* ("righteousness, uprightness") and *pistis* ("faith, trust, confidence") see *BDAG*, 247–49, 818–21.

[17] Daniel Boyarin uses the label "Paul as Jewish Cultural Critic" in an effort to answer the question "What was *wrong* with Jewish culture in Paul's eyes to necessitate a radical reform?" (52) in *A Radical Jew: Paul and the Politics of Identity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 52–56. We prefer broadening the question to ask "What was wrong with Paul's *worlds* to necessitate his radical Christ-centered mission to the Gentiles?" For apostles (like Paul) as change agents commissioned by God to proclaim God's new order rooted in God's raising Christ from the dead, see Malina and Pilch, *Social Science Commentary*, 335–37.

chosen by God to rule. Paul frequently uses "Christ" to refer to Jesus (Rom 9:5; 15:7; Gal 1:1; 2:19-21). The most explicit connection Paul makes between Jesus and the Davidic covenant comes in Romans 1:2-4, where Jesus Christ is directly called a descendant of David. When one keeps reading in that context, one might wonder if Paul assumes that his apostolic commission to bring "the obedience of faith among all the nations" is directly based on his allegiance to a Davidic messiah (Rom 1:5). Paul is ready to write that Jesus Christ will rule over all (Phil 2:10-11), but he does not routinely ascribe this lordship to Christ's fulfillment of the Davidic covenant. Nevertheless, it is an important source for the development of Paul's Christology.[18]

Aside from the promise that a son of David would occupy David's throne forever (2 Sam 7:12-16), the Davidic covenant also includes the idea that God has specially chosen Jerusalem, also called Zion (Ps 2:6-7; Jer 33:15-16; Pss of Sol 17:21-22). While Paul insists in Galatians (1:17; 2:6) that he is not beholden to the early church leaders who resided in Jerusalem, there is evidence both there and in the letter to the Romans that Jerusalem was the center of Paul's geographical world (Gal 1:17-18; 2:1-2; Rom 11:26; 15:25-32). In addition to its Davidic associations, Jerusalem also set the standard for fidelity to Israel's traditions in Paul's day. Jerusalem is located in Judea, hence the designation, Judean (Gk. *Ioudais*) or "Jew" in most English translations of the New Testament.

The Merit of the Fathers

In Romans 9:5 and 11:28, it is clear that Paul thinks Jews have a special place in God's plan because of "the fathers" (Gk. *patēres*; Heb. *'abot*), a term that includes the idea that Abraham and other progenitors of the Jewish people have merit with God on which Jews of later generations could benefit (e.g., Exod 32:13; Lev 26:42, 45; Deut 4:37; 2 Chr 6:42; Rom 4:16-17). If the merits of the fathers benefit the people of God, how much more the merits of Christ (Phil 3:4-11). The blessing of life obtained for "the many" through the righteous obedience of Christ (which exceeds the effect of Adam's disobedience;

[18] Gordon D. Fee argues that much of Paul's Christology has its origins in a Jewish messianism that is rooted in the Davidic covenant (e.g., 2 Sam 7; Ps 2; Rom 1:2-4; 1 Cor 15:24-28); see his *Pauline Christology* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2007), 242, 540–42, 552–54.

Rom 5:17-19) reflects a similar understanding of merits based on wise and righteous living in obedience to the Torah (e.g., 2 Bar 24:1; 44:14; Test. Levi 13:5; Test Napht. 8:5; *m. Mak.* 3.16; *m. 'Abot* 6.11; cf. Matt 6:19-21; Rom 2:13).[19]

Paul's Acquaintance with Hebrew or Aramaic

The author of the book of Acts, who displays a fascination for languages, describes Paul speaking Hebrew or Aramaic (Acts 21:40; 22:2). Although he describes himself to be "a Hebrew born of Hebrews" (Phil 3:5), a Hebrew, Israelite, and descendant of Abraham (2 Cor 11:22), we lack evidence from Paul's letters that he knew much Hebrew. We have some evidence of Hebrew ability in Paul's "weight of glory" phrase in 2 Corinthians 4:17, which is best explained as formed by someone who knew the meanings of the Hebrew root, *kbd*, which forms the basis for both the noun "glory" and the adjective "heavy." Paul also uses certain Aramaic words, *abba* (Rom 8:15; Gal 4:6) and *marana tha* ("Lord come," 1 Cor 16:22), perhaps received from Jewish Christian liturgy.[20]

Paul's scriptural quotations are overwhelmingly from the Septuagint (LXX), the Greek translation of the Old Testament.[21] It is unclear how well he knew the Scriptures in their original Hebrew or Aramaic forms. Evidence that he was aware of the Hebrew text can be found in the few places where he does cite a text with wording that follows

[19] On "the merit of the fathers" (Heb. *zekhut 'abot*), see W. D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism: Some Rabbinic Elements in Pauline Theology*, 4th ed. (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980), 268–69; and Elaine Phillips, "'They Are Loved on Account of the Patriarchs: *Zekhut Avot* and the Covenant of Abraham," in *Perspectives on Our Father Abraham*, 187–220.

[20] There are Aramaic sections of Daniel, Ezra-Nehemiah, and the Dead Sea Scrolls (e.g., 1 Qap *Gen*). There are also some Aramaisms in the Hellenistic writings of Josephus. See Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *A Wandering Aramean: Collected Aramean Essays*, SBLMS 25 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1979); *idem,* "The Aramaic Language and the Study of the New Testament" *JBL* 99 (1980): 5–21 and Michael D. Guinan, "Aramaic, Aramaism," *NIDB* 1:226.

[21] Albert Pietersma and Benjamin Wright, eds., *A New English Translation of the Septuagint and Other Greek Translations Traditionally under That Title* (New York: Oxford, 2007); Alfred Rahlfs and Robert Hanhart, eds., *Septuaginta* (Stuttgart, 1935, 1979); Leonard Greenspan, "Septuagint," *NIDB* 5:168.

the Hebrew text against the LXX. Also, Paul's repeated use of "the just shall live by faith," omitting either the "his faith" of the Hebrew text or the "my faith" of the LXX, may indicate that he knew of the difference in wording in this phrase of Habakkuk 2:4 and chose neither reading when quoting the text (Rom 1:17; Gal 3:11; cf. Heb 10:38).[22] Paul's interpretation of Scripture is similar to some midrashic methods originating with Hillel (first century CE)—e.g., Heb. *qal wahomer*, "less to greater" (e.g., "how much more," Rom 5:9,15; 11:12; 2 Cor 3:8, 11)—Heb. *gezarah shawah* (analogy, joining various passages on the basis of a similar word or phrase, e.g. "my people" in Rom 9:25-26; "stone," Rom 9:32-33; "wisdom" and "wise," 1 Cor 3:19, 20).[23]

Paul's Greek or Hellenistic World

The Greek world in which Paul moved was an amalgam of cultures. There was no Greek nation or state. It is often labeled "Greco-Roman" because Greek culture had impacted the Mediterranean world resulting in Hellenism. With Hellenism came improved travel, exchanged or exported goods and ideas, the spread of disease, transformed or forgotten traditions, and the abandonment of one's native land either as hopeful traveler or despairing slave.[24] Paul the missionary traveler

[22] For further discussion of these options, see G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson, eds., *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2007), 608–11; Gerard Mussies, "The Use of Hebrew and Aramaic in the Greek New Testament," *NTS* 30 (1984), 411–32.

[23] Midrash (from Heb. *derash* "seek, search out") is a rabbinic method of scriptural interpretation, beginning with the seven middoth (rules) of Hillel and developed into the thirteen middoth of R. Ishmael (20–200 CE). See Carol Bakhos, "Midrash, Midrashim," in *EDEJ*, 944–49; Richard N. Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), 6–35 (first-century Jewish interpretations), 88–116 (Paul's quotations).

[24] The movement of goods and people was easy and cheap in the empire; for examples see the travels of Paul, Aquila, and Priscilla in Acts and the accounts of traveling merchants, cited in M. P. Charlesworth, *Roman Empire* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), 86–87. Note also the diverse list of diseases of late antiquity in *Asclepius: A Collection and Interpretation of Testimonies*, ed. E. J. and L. Edelstein (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1945). For online access to most ancient Greek and Roman sources, see http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/.

readily identifies those regions he visited where Greek language and culture was born. Instead of "Greece" (Gk. *Hellas*, Acts 20:2) he writes Achaia (1 Cor 16:15; 2 Cor 1:1; 9:2; 11:10; Rom 15:26; 1 Thess 1:7-8) and identifies Macedonia in the north Aegean sea region (1 Cor 16:5; Rom 15:26; 1 Thess 1:7-8).

The Greco-Roman world had many social and cultural problems with a diversity of religious and philosophical responses to them.[25] As a result, Paul, the Hellenistic Jew and servant of Christ, encountered the challenges of idolatry (mysterious cults and emperor worship), fatalism (astrology and magic), and immorality (adultery, drunkenness, and temple prostitution)[26] that were contrary to both the moral code of Torah and life in the Spirit of Christ (Exod 20:2-17; Gal 5:16-25). These challenges or threats presented ongoing problems in Paul's missionary work among the Gentiles.

For Paul, to be a Hellenist and function effectively in Hellenistic cultures means to be educated and civilized, as we can see from his parallelism in Romans 1:14 ("a debtor to both Greek and barbarians") and his generalizations in 1 Corinthians 1:22-25 ("for Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom"). We will consider the following areas in which Hellenists were educated or influenced, since they intersect with Paul's letters: rhetoric, philosophy, literature.

[25] For more discussion on this matter, see Puskas and Robbins, *INT*, 12–26 ("Age of Anxiety and Aspiration").

[26] On the association of sexual immorality with idolatry, see Ezek 6:9; 23:37; Wis 13–14; Rom 1:14-27; 1 Cor 10; Philo *Spec. laws* 3:37–42; *Sib. Or.* 3.37–8; see Elliott and Reasoner, *Documents and Images*, 263–69 (includes a censure of sexual immorality by Stoic philosopher Musonius Rufus, ca. 50 CE, pp. 263–65).

On more sources for non-Israelite worship, see John Ferguson, ed., *Greek and Roman Religion: A Source Book* (Park Ridge, NJ: Noyes Press, 1980), and especially Hans-Josef Klauck, *The Religious Context of Early Christianity: A Guide to Graeco-Roman Religions*, trans. Brian McNeil (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003).

Fig. 3: Head of Alexander the Great, by Leochares, ca. 330 BC.

Rhetoric

Aside from brief allusions as in Philippians 3:6 (a Pharisee), we know little of Paul's education. But it is clear, for example, in 2 Corinthians 10–12, how skillful Paul is in the rhetoric of persuasion. Paul's stylistic techniques, such as irony (11:19-20, wise Corinthians!), synecdoche (2 Cor 3:15, Moses = Torah), aporia (3:1), and gnome (9:7, "God loves a cheerful giver"), provide a special emphasis to what Paul is saying in his letters.[27] The way that Paul employs logic (logos),

[27] For more examples, see Stanley E. Porter, "Paul of Tarsus and His Letters," *Handbook of Classical Rhetoric* (2001), 576–84 and Nigel Turner,

emotional appeals (pathos), and his own example (ethos) in this section that is sometimes called "the letter of tears" shows that he must have had some training in rhetoric. All of Paul's letters have been outlined following the guidelines of ancient rhetorical handbooks.[28]

Some scholars have invested a tremendous amount of attention on the rhetorical conventions of the first century by looking at how Greek and Roman rhetoricians categorized and prescribed various components and genres of discourse.[29] The approach generally seeks to place Paul's letters into the categories of the rhetoricians and then allow these categories to serve as indications for how to read Paul's letters. One weakness of this approach is that rhetorical categories and prescriptions generally treat the components and genres of discourse in a singular manner, restricting the interpretation, whereas most written discourse employs a variety of different conventions (e.g., diatribe, *paraenesis, protreptic* speech)[30] and often exemplifies more than one rhetorical category (e.g., demonstrative and deliberative in one letter) or genre (e.g., autobiography, kerygma, prophetic denouncement, and apocalyptic material).[31]

Style, 80–105. For more discussion, see "Four Stylistic Features," 36–41, of our chap. 2.

[28] See for example, George A. Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), 141–56.

[29] See for example, Ben Witherington III, *New Testament Rhetoric: An Introductory Guide to the Art of Persuasion in and of the New Testament* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2009), and Duane F. Watson, *The Rhetoric of the New Testament: A Bibliographic Survey*, Tools for Biblical Study (Blandford Forum, UK: Deo, 2010).

[30] Diatribe probably originated in Hellenistic philosophical schools, where a teacher would try to expose the errors of his students and lead them into truth; for primary sources, see, e.g., Teles Bion (third century BCE); and first century CE sources, e.g., Epictetus *Discourses*; Musonius Rufus; Plutarch; Seneca *Moral Essays*. See also Stowers, *The Diatribe*, 1981. For primary sources (e.g., Epictetus) and discussion on *protreptic* speech and *paraenesis* (exhortation), see Elliott and Reasoner, *Documents and Images*, 68–74. See also *The Cynic Epistles: A Study Edition*, SBLSBS 12, ed. Abraham J. Malherbe (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1977).

[31] For example, there is a diversity of opinions on the types of rhetoric and rhetorical outlines that Paul may have employed (e.g., is Gal deliberative, apologetic, or demonstrative?), and there is some misuse of certain rhetorical

It is best to read Paul's letters with an eye on the rhetorical categories and techniques contemporary to him, while at the same time privileging Paul's distinctive style and missionary context as decisive on interpretive questions.

Philosophy

The "wisdom" that Paul associates with the Hellenists in 1 Corinthians 1:22-25 could be used interchangeably with the discipline of philosophy in the discourse of the first century (Plato, *Apol.* 20DE; Plutarch; Philo). While his letters never name philosophical schools, we see Paul writing as if he can accept the reality of Plato's world of the forms in 2 Corinthians 4:16-18 (Plato, *Phaed.* 66DE, 67E). The book of Hebrews is famous for its use of some form of Platonism (or the more eclectic Philo of Alexandria) in describing the temples in heaven and in Jerusalem, but this letter can only be considered Pauline in a secondary sense. When Paul describes people whose god is their belly and whose glory is in their shame, he may be employing polemical rhetoric (exaggerated) against some version of Epicurean philosophy (Phil 3:19; Rom 16:18; Epicurus, *Epistle to Menoeceus* 132; Xenophon, *Mem.* 1.6.8; 2.1.2). Even though the phrase "let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die" (1 Cor 15:32) is derived from Isaiah 22:13, similar language occurs in Plutarch's anti-Epicurean writings (*Mor.* 1098C, 1100D, 1125D). Paul's use of allegorical (nonliteral, symbolic) interpretation in 1 Corinthians 9:9-10; 10:1-4; and Galatians 4:21-31 has close affinities with that of the Hellenistic Jewish philosopher, Philo (e.g., on muzzling the ox, *Vir.* 145; the divine rock, *Somn.* 2.221-2; on Hagar, *Alleg. Interp.* 3.244-5).[32] Paul's knowledge of philosophy that is

---

schemata, see Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul the Letter-Writer*, 65–86. The literary forms and genres (e.g., kerygma and apocalyptic) will be discussed in our chap. 2, pp. 35–36.

[32] Philo of Alexandria (ca. 20 BCE–50 CE) was more eclectic than Platonic and used allegorical interpretation to find common ground between his Israelite faith and Hellenistic philosophy (*Abr* 68; *Somn.* 1.73; *Spec.* 1.287); see Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis*, 30–33,109–13; "Philo," and "Philo, Allegorical Commentary," in *EDEJ*, 1063–72; Bruce W. Winter, *Philo and Paul among the Sophists*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002).

evident in his letters is what we might expect from an educated person in the first-century Mediterranean world.[33]

The book of Acts (ca. 90) makes more explicit Paul's ability to hold his own with philosophers. It pictures Paul debating with the Stoics and Epicureans in Athens (Acts 17:18). The scornful response to Paul's mention of Christ's resurrection from the dead is what one would expect from Epicureans (Acts 17:32; cf. Aeschylus, *Eumenides* 647–48; Epicurus, *Epistle to Menoeceus* 127–32; Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 10.139.2).[34]

Literature

There are some hints that Paul and the Pauline school had a basic familiarity with certain works of Greek literature. Although Paul, in 1 Corinthians, does not provide a verbatim quotation from Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus* (415–20), it is significant that his final words regarding the man who is sleeping with his father's wife is very similar to the fulfilled words of Teiresias' oracle from Apollo. Paul concludes this section of 1 Corinthians with a quotation from Deuteronomy (17:7), but his directions are the same as those Sophocles attributes to Apollo for the moral consequences of a man who sleeps with his mother (i.e., "expel, cast out" 1 Cor 5:13; *Oed. Tyr.* 418–19).[35] In 1 Corinthians

[33] On Epicureans, see A. A. Long and David N. Sedley, *The Hellenistic Philosophies*, 2 vols (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 1:25–157; 2:18–162; and *The Epicurus Reader: Selected Writings and Testimonia*, trans. and ed. Brad Inwood and L. P. Gerson, intro. D. S. Hutchinson (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994). Clarence E. Glad, however, suggests that Pauline churches had *some* similarities to Epicurean schools that taught "psychagogic adaptation" to others for communal solidarity as in 1 Cor 9:22 ("I have become all things to all people"), *Paul and Philodemus: Adaptability in Epicurean and Early Christian Psychagogy*, SuppNovT 81 (Leiden: Brill), 1, 10.

[34] See Pervo, *Acts*, 423–42; Bruce, *Acts* (1988), 332–44. On Stoics, see Hans F. A. von Arnim, *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta*, 4 vols. (Leipzig: Teubner, 1921–24); C. K. Barrett, *New Testament Background: Selected Documents* (New York: Harper & Row, 1961), 61–71. For discussion, see John Sellars, *Stoicism*, Ancient Philosophies 1 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006); Robert D. Hicks, *Stoic and Epicurean* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1962); and Troels Engberg-Pedersen, *Paul and the Stoics* (WJK, 2000).

[35] For text and discussion, see Elliott and Reasoner, *Documents and Images*, 268–69. For complete translation see http://classics.mit.edu/Sophocles/oedipus.html.

15:33, Paul quotes from Menander's epigram in *Thais*: "bad company corrupts good morals." This occurs in a context where belief in an afterlife is linked to a concern for moral living in this life (1 Cor 15:32-34). Titus 1:12 (post-Pauline?) and Acts 17:28 both cite Epimenides, *De Oraculis,* "They fashioned a tomb for you (O Zeus) . . . the Cretans always liars . . . you are not dead; you live and abide forever, for in you we live and move and have our being."[36]

The letters of Paul may not indicate a thorough knowledge of Greek literature. What we see here as well is a somewhat limited use of Greek literature that would be expected of anyone living in the first-century Mediterranean world with a Greek education.[37]

Paul's Fluency with Koine Greek

The results of Alexander the Great's efforts toward uniting his world through Hellenistic culture and language (336–323 BCE) were still evident in Paul's world (Plutarch, *Mor.* 329B–D). Paul spoke and wrote a Hellenistic or Koine (common) Greek. It was basically Attic combined with several dialects resulting from the fusion of Greek language and thought with Near Eastern culture.

Koine Greek is the language of Paul's letters. Paul's Greek fits somewhere between literary and colloquial Koine.[38] Although steeped in the Greek Septuagint and colloquial expressions, Paul writes with the Koine of an educated man (e.g., Epictetus). There are places where Paul appears to interrupt himself midsentence, ignoring syntax and logical flow to focus on the issue at hand (e.g., Rom 3:2-4; 5:13-19). All readers of Paul's letters would agree that "there are some things in them hard to understand" (2 Pet 3:16). A few of Paul's abrupt changes in syntax or subject may be viewed as figures of expression involving omission or addition (e.g., aporia, ellipsis, aposiopesis).[39] Nevertheless,

[36] Cited in Bruce, *Acts* (1988), 338–39.

[37] For further insights by a classicist interpreting Paul's letters in the light of Greek and Roman literature, see Sarah Ruden, *Paul among the People*; see also *Hellenistic Commentary*, 335–508 (Romans-Philemon).

[38] Stanley E. Porter, "Greek Language," *NIDB* 2:665; see also the NT Greek lexicon, *BDAG* (2000).

[39] Stanley Porter, "Paul of Tarsus," *Handbook of Classical Rhetoric*, 576–84; Turner, *Style*, 80–105; Bullinger, *Figures of Speech*, 108, 111, 151, 159, 480, 950.

the literary corpus of Paul the busy missionary meets most of the recommendations of Dionysios Halikarnasseus in *The Art of Composition* for a "delightful, beautiful, and effective composition."[40]

Paul's Roman World

Paul and the readers of his letters were not conscious that they were living in the first century of the "Roman Empire," labeled by modern historians for the time period beginning with Augustus's accession to the position of consul in 27 BCE. For Paul and his fellow Jews, the Romans were the latest in a line of foreign powers (e.g., Egyptians, Babylonians, Persians, Syrian Greeks) that had sought to dominate the Jewish people (e.g., Exod 12–14; Ps 137; Dan; Esth; 1 Macc 1; 2 Macc 4). Much like Jews in many parts of the world today who have to negotiate how to live faithfully under governments and within cultures that do not prioritize what a Jew's religious identity requires, so Paul and other Jews had to find ways to live as Jews (e.g., Philo, Josephus) under a government that made it difficult to do so. It was a system of Roman patrons with their (inferior) clients and the brokers who mediated (goods and services) between them (Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 2.9).[41]

While propagandists both for Augustus and for Nero sought to depict these emperors' reigns as beginnings of a golden age,[42] pious Jews would certainly have been skeptical of these claims, awaiting instead an age of peace and prosperity in their land that would come from a knowledge of the Lord and the rule of his Davidic king (Isa 9:6-7; 11:1-10; Ps 2:7-9; Pss of Sol 17:21-25).

What did the Roman world mean for Paul and his churches? While Roman domination of the Mediterranean world allowed for safer and

[40] Chrys C. Caragounis, *The Development of Greek and the New Testament: Morphology, Syntax, Phonology, and Textual Transmission* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2006), 422–74.

[41] See Malina and Pilch, *Social Science Commentary* (2006), 382–85. On Roman patronage vs. Pauline communities and God's greatness vs. Rome's patrons, see David J. Downs, "Is God Paul's Patron? The Economy of Patronage in Paul's Theology," in *Engaging Economics: New Testament Scenarios and Early Christian Reception*, ed. Bruce W. Longenecker and Kelly D. Liebengood (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009), 129–56.

[42] See "The Gospel of Augustus" in Elliott and Reasoner, *Documents and Images*, 35–38, 119–61.

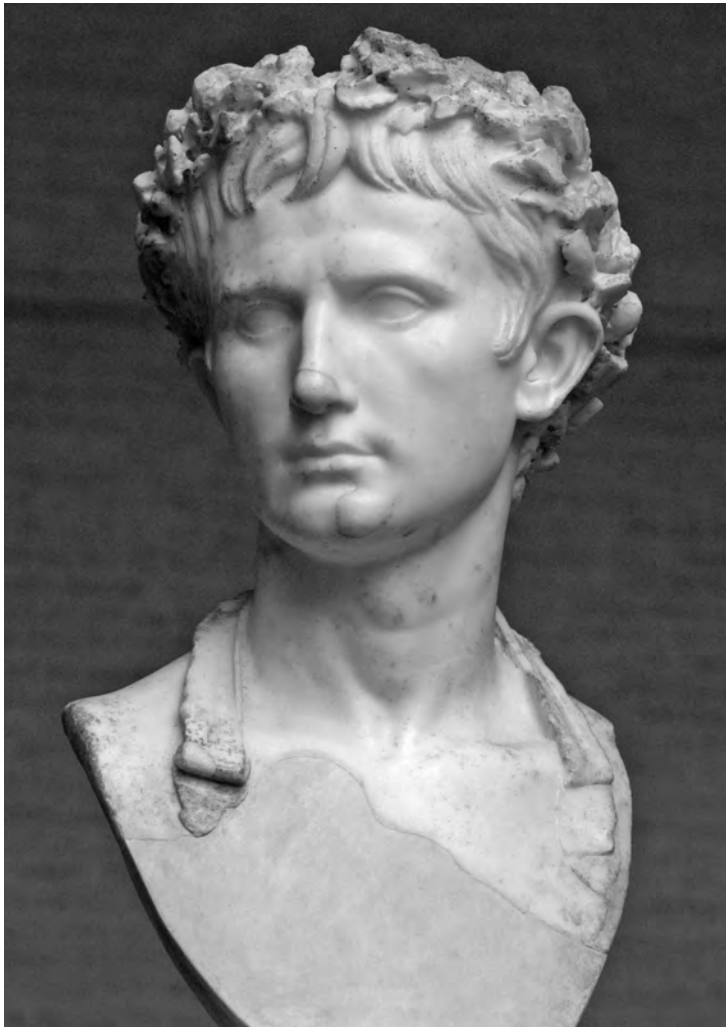


Fig. 4: So-called "Augustus Bevilacqua." Bust of the emperor with the Civic Crown, period of his reign.

more efficient travel than in previous centuries (the *Pax Augusta* celebrated in Horace, *Odes* 4.15; Pliny, *Nat.* 14.1; 27.1.2), it also involved an idolatrous, inescapable call through cultural, legal, and military measures to recognize Rome as the ultimate authority and guarantor of human flourishing. Paul no doubt benefited from Roman roads and the relative safety that Roman rule provided for land and sea travel in

the Mediterranean world.[43] But for the reasons above (e.g., emperor worship), Paul could not render unqualified endorsement to Roman policies in the Mediterranean worlds in which he moved.[44]

Paul and the Roman Government

Though Paul tells the Romans to be subject to the governing authorities and identifies government as a minister of God for good, one must remember that Paul spent considerable time in Roman prisons (Phlm 1:1, 9f., 23; Phil 1:7, 13f.; Rom 16:7). The tradition is very strong that Paul lost his life at the hands of Roman authorities. No one can claim that Paul's allegiance to the Roman imperial government superseded his allegiance to the God of Israel and this God's messiah. Still, New Testament readers differ on what sort of loyalty Paul showed to Rome.

On the one hand, it is possible to view Paul as a faithful Roman citizen exhorting believers to obey the government, "for it is a minister of God for good" (Rom 13:4). Some scholars support this straightforward reading of Romans 13:1-7 with a politically compliant portrait of Paul that they discover in the book of Acts. Here, Paul often receives fair treatment from Roman officials (Acts 18:14-16; 27:3, 43; 23:9; 25:25) and even presents himself as a Roman citizen (Acts 16:37-38; 22:25, 29; 23:27). But Acts offers no explanation for why Paul invokes his Roman citizenship at some times and not at others (Acts 14:19-20; 16:37-38). In his letters, Paul makes no mention of his being a citizen of Rome. He reports "countless beatings" and being "beaten with rods" (e.g., 2 Cor 11:23-25). Roman law forbade the flogging of Roman citizens (Livy, *Hist.* 10.9.4). Is the mention of Paul's citizenship employed in Acts a convenient literary motif or is it a historical reminiscence?[45]

[43] See Brian M. Rapske, "Acts, Travel and Shipwreck," in *The Book of Acts in Its Greco-Roman Setting*, ed. David W. J. Gill and Conrad Gempf, vol. 2 of BAFC, 1–47; M. P. Charlesworth, *Roman Empire* (London: OUP, 1967), 86–87.

[44] See John Dominic Crossan and Jonathan L. Reed, *In Search of Paul: How Jesus' Apostle Opposed Rome's Empire with God's Kingdom* (New York: Harper Collins, 2004).

[45] On Paul as Roman citizen, see Brian Rapske, *Paul in Roman Custody*, vol. 3 of BAFC (1994), 83–90. On Paul's Roman citizenship as a convenient literary device, see Pervo, *Acts*, 568–69. For a more subversive view of Luke and Acts—e.g., radical prophecies of God's empire (Luke 1:52f.), Roman

On the other hand, is it possible to view Paul as a client of Rome whose devotion to God and Christ Jesus make him a radically disobedient Roman? Paul repeatedly uses terms from the imperial cult (the worship of the Roman emperor and his family) and applies them to Jesus Christ (e.g., savior, lord). In this perspective, Paul would never offer incense to the Roman emperor, as people in the Roman provinces were sometimes asked to do on pain of punishment. In his letter to the Philippians, it is clear that he is in a Roman jail, but he is unabashedly enthusiastic that the behavior that landed him in jail is spreading to more and more people. On this reading, his paragraph on government in Romans 13 is what the Romans needed to hear him say, but the paragraph is not an endorsement of Rome's claim to be the ultimate benefactor and political authority of the world. In this context, Romans 13 reads more as a demotion of Caesar! Paul and his community belong to a commonwealth in heaven, not Rome, and their savior is the Lord Jesus Christ, not Caesar (Phil 3:20). These convictions are contrary to Caesar and his achievements, which are boldly acclaimed, for example, in the Priene Inscription of Asia Minor and the *Res Gestae Divi Augusti*.[46]

Paul and Roman Social Order

The Roman cities where Paul's house churches[47] were organized had well-defined social expectations. People were to know their place

---

corruption (Acts 24:26), and cruelty (Luke 13:1ff.; 21:12ff.; 23)—see Richard Cassidy, *Jesus, Politics, and Society* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1978), 20–49, 50–76, 126–35.

[46] On the challenges and different views regarding the interpretation of Rom 13, see Neil Elliott, *The Arrogance of Nations: Reading Romans in the Shadow of Empire* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008), 152–56. For translations of primary sources on emperor worship, see Elliott and Reasoner, *Documents and Images*, 35–38 and 119–61.

[47] For a survey of how Paul's early house churches may have been organized, or at least perceived by outsiders (e.g., synagogues, philosophical schools, ancient mysteries, voluntary associations and guilds), see Richard A. Ascough, *What Are They Saying about The Formation of Pauline Churches?* (New York: Paulist, 1998). For primary sources, see Richard S. Ascough, Philip A. Harland, and John S. Kloppenborg, *Associations in the Greco-Roman World* (Waco: Baylor, 2012). For more discussion, see Philip A. Harland, *Associations,*

and stay in it. All was done for the sake of preserving social order. The caution reflected in Romans 13 (*hypotassō*) reflects this assumption, as well as Paul's concern for orderly worship in his assemblies (1 Cor 14:40, *tassō*).[48] If the marriage and morality laws implemented by Augustus (*lex Julia*, ca. 17 BCE, Suetonius, *Aug.* 34; Horace, *Odes* 4.5.2) addressed a widespread concern caused by "new women," financially secure, breaking with traditional roles, morality, and customs (e.g., Sallust, *Bell. Cat.*, 25; Cicero, *Cael.* 32, 35), then Paul also would want to provide some mediating guidelines on marriage and behavior in public assemblies (*ekklēsia*) for both men and women there (e.g., 1 Cor 5–8, 10–14).[49] If Paul's public assemblies were places attended by (or influenced by) these new women, he writes to them (and everyone else) from a patriarchal perspective but includes some encouraging surprises—e.g., mutuality in marital intimacy (7:2-3), women are to pray and *prophesy* with a head covering (11:5; Ovid, *Ars.* 3) and have authority (*exousia*) over their *own* heads (1 Cor 11:10), the mutual interdependence of men and women, and matriarchal priority in childbirth (vv. 11-12).[50] Paul came to depend on women benefactors and coworkers in his missionary work: for example, Phoebe, a deacon of

---

Synagogues, and Congregations: Claiming a Place in Ancient Mediterranean Society (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003).

[48] On *hypotassō* and *tassō*, "to bring about an order of things by arranging or putting in their place," see *BDAG*, 991, 1042. See primary sources illustrating certain excesses in religious cults among women and slaves in Elliott and Reasoner, *Documents and Images*, 269–79.

[49] The thesis of Bruce Winter, *Roman Wives, Roman Widows: The Appearance of New Women and the Pauline Churches* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003), 39–58; see also Rudin, *Paul among the People* (2010), 72–118 (esp. 81, 86), and Antoinette Clark Wire, *Corinthian Women Prophets* (1990); on sources and discussion (i.e., how widespread the issue was), see Elliott and Reasoner, *Documents and Images*, 260–65; on Paul engaged in a Hellenistic dialogue over marriage, see Will Deming, *Paul on Marriage and Celibacy: The Hellenistic Background of 1 Corinthians* 7 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004). See also Sarah B. Pomeroy, *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves: Women in Classical Antiquity* (New York: Schocken, 1975); Lynn H. Cohick, *Women in the World of Earliest Christians: Illuminating Ancient Ways of Life* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2009), "new woman as poetic caricature," 72–75.

[50] For a feminist discussion on 1 Cor 11:2-16 and 14:33b-36, see Jouette M. Bassler, "1 Corinthians," in *Women's Bible Commentary* (2012), 557–65, and *Women in Scripture* (2000), 475–78.

the church of Cenchreae, near Corinth (Rom 16:1-2), Apphia (Phlm 1), Chloe (if a believer, 1 Cor 1:11), Prisca (16:3-5; 1 Cor 16:19; cf. Acts 18:2, 26), Junia "prominent among the apostles" (Rom 16:7), Euodia and Syntyche (Phil 4:1), and, possibly, Lydia of Thyatira (Acts 16:12-40).[51] The above summary by no means addresses all of the challenging problems associated with Paul and the women in his communities. These are discussed in more detail in our chapters on specific letters of Paul that address these matters (e.g., 1 Cor, Eph, Col, 1 Tim, Titus).

Paul's Acquaintance with Latin

Compared to the sparse evidence for Paul's knowledge of Hebrew or Aramaic, his letters disclose even less about his acquaintance with Latin. As mentioned above, Koine Greek prevailed even among the occupying Romans, but they spoke their native Latin with each other and used it for official purposes in the empire. The only transliterated Latin words in Paul's letters are *praetorium* and Caesar (Phil 1:13; 4:22). "Beaten with rods" (Gk. *'rabdizō*, 2 Cor 11:25; Acts 16:22) was a Roman punishment (Lat. *virgis caedere*) not rendered to citizens of Rome. We may assume that someone who traveled through much of the Roman empire (e.g., Ephesus, Philippi, Corinth) and spent time in Roman prisons would have heard and learned some Latin, but it is uncertain how much of it Paul knew.[52]

[51] Cohick, *Women in the World of Earliest Christians*, 301–20; J. Eldon Epp, *Junia: The First Woman Apostle* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005). Margaret Y. MacDonald, "The Religious Lives of Women in Early Christianity," *Women's Bible Commentary* (2012), 640–47. Paul, of course, had other coworkers, both in the mission field—e.g., Timothy (1 Cor 16:10f.) and Titus (2 Cor 7:13ff.)—and in congregations—e.g., Stephanus and his household (1 Cor 16:15), Philemon and Archippus (Phlm 1), and Epaphroditus (Phil 2:25). See Robert Banks, *Paul's Idea of Community: The Early House Churches in Their Historical Setting* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1988), 166–68; David Balch and Carolyn Osiek, *Families in the New Testament World: Households and House Churches* (WJK, 1997), especially part 2.

[52] Paul also traveled to the Latin-speaking province of Illyricum (Rom 15:19) and finally Rome. The Gospels and Acts contain more Latinisms than Paul's letters, e.g., denarius, legion, colony, tavern, as well as Latin loanwords for executioner and handkerchief, and certain passages may offer evidence of Latin idioms, e.g., Mark 14:65; 15:15, 19; Luke 12:58; Acts 17:9; 19:12, 38; 28:15). See C. F. D. Moule, *Idiom Book of New Testament Greek*. 2nd ed.

Summary

Paul inhabited different worlds. His religious identity was Jewish, but he differed from other Jews because he did not endorse Torah observance for those Gentile God-fearers who embraced his gospel. For Paul, the Christ event transforms the exclusively Jewish Torah covenant into a *Gentile inclusive* law of Christ (Rom 10:4; 1 Cor 9:21; Gal 6:2). The apostle wrote in Koine Greek and enjoyed the benefits of a Greek education. His primary thesaurus for ideas and quotations is the Greek translation of the Jewish Scriptures, the Septuagint, rather than the classics of Greek literature. He enjoyed the benefits of the infrastructure and stability that Roman rule provided, while sometimes running afoul of the Roman authorities and landing in their prisons. In the end, it is best to view him as a radically Christ-centered missionary, valuing his heavenly citizenship more than any identity that terrestrial cultures or political entities could offer him (Phil 3:20-21).

(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 192; F. F. Bruce, "Languages: Latin," *AYBD* (1992), 4:221; *The Language of the New Testament: Classic Essays*, ed. S. E. Porter (JSNTSup 60; Sheffield; JSOT, 1991), 126–62.

CHAPTER 2

The Letters of Paul in Context

It is unusual that any religion's scriptures would have so many letters. The church leaders who decided on the books of the New Testament seemed to think that these letters were worth later generations' reading. But it is remarkable that such a high percentage of the uniquely Christian Scriptures are letters that were originally addressed to people other than ourselves. They were not written to an implied audience of religious readers of all time, as perhaps the Qur'an was. The church fathers' decision to include so many letters in their canon pushes those who read the New Testament as Scripture to read beyond the literal sense, since they seek meaning in direct discourse to other audiences in situations different from their own. So it is worth taking some time to understand what Paul's letters are like in the context of how others wrote letters in the Hellenistic period and under the Roman Principate and to reflect on the influence of Paul's letters in relation to the rest of the New Testament.

To differing extents, all Paul's letters are occasional.[1] They all seem written for an implied situation. Since these situations are different, we must never forget that each of Paul's letters is significantly different from the others.[2] Some seem addressed to a very immediate occasion, such as Paul's letter to Philemon that asks him to accept his runaway slave back or sections of 1 Corinthians in which he tells his audience to exclude the man sleeping with his father's wife and to stop suing each other in court. The letter to the Romans seems more general, since there are long sections where Paul explains his gospel or tries to figure out where the Jewish people are in the plan of God, after the Messiah

[1] Morna D. Hooker, *A Preface to Paul* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 9–10.

[2] David G. Horrell, *An Introduction to the Study of Paul*, 2nd ed. (London: T&T Clark, 2006), 44.

has come. But even in the letter to the Romans, there is evidence that Paul is addressing specific problems or situations in Rome of which he has been informed, and of course his own situation also affects how he is writing. Though all Paul's letters are occasional, there are also principles or explanations that seem to transcend the immediate occasion.

Compared to the letters of his own time, Paul's letters are much longer than the norm. The typical length of a letter in the first century CE was about the length of Paul's letter to Philemon, about three hundred words long. Most of his letters in the New Testament, thus, are more extensive than the normal letters of that time. If Paul's letters were read aloud to local churches, it is likely that their audiences considered them challenging both to follow and to completely understand, because of their length and complexity of ideas. This is confirmed by the description of Paul's letters as containing some things difficult to understand (2 Pet 3:16).

Basic Characteristics of Ancient Letters

The basic characteristics of the letter genre have changed little in history. Letters are a form of written communication between two parties when person-to-person contact is impossible or inappropriate. Letters presuppose a sender and addressee; everyone else is a third party or outsider. The sender's side of the dialogue dominates the letter. The addressee's conversation can be inferred but is not fully articulated until the addressee responds in written form as a sender. Letters are also occasional, written in response to some situation or set of circumstances. Something prompts the sender to write, even if it is merely the fact of physical distance. Letters are often spontaneous, written in reaction to an incident. The above observations apply to all letters whether they are informal, personal, and private, or formal, official, and public.

Six Basic Types

From the hundreds of letters of antiquity, at least six basic letter types have been identified.[3]

[3] On functional "letter" (Paul, papyri) and literary "epistle" (Plutarch, Seneca), see Deissmann, *LAE*; R. E. Brown revises Deissman's two categories to include Eph as "epistolary" in his *Introduction*, 410–12 ; H.-J. Klauck sees Deissmann's two categories of letter and epistle as insufficient (70f.) and

1. Person-to-person(s)—love letters, letters of friendship, private business, recommendation or introduction between family or friends (e.g., Cicero's Letters to Friends, 3 John and Philemon [recommendation], many Egyptian papyri are personal letters).
2. Business—dealing with trade taxes, wills, and land (e.g., invoices and complaints about business deals are found among the Egyptian papyri).
3. Official—from political or military leaders to constituents, subordinates, or superiors (e.g., letters from Augustus, Pliny to Trajan, all of Paul's authentic letters according to Stirewalt).
4. Public Letters—literary, public pleas, and philosophical treatises (e.g., letters from Isocrates, Plato, Plutarch, Seneca).
5. Fictitious Letters—purporting to come from heaven, novelistic or pseudonymous letters (letters of Hippocrates, Letter of Aristeas, 2 Clement).
6. Discursive or Essay—exposition of teaching, monograph (e.g., 2 Maccabees 1, many of Cicero's letters, Letters of Epicurus, Rom, Martyrdom of Polycarp).

There is some overlapping of the above categories. We find personal letters of Roman officials written to friends and family. Fictitious letters of a novelistic type include those by Themistocles and Chion of Heraclea; other fictitious letters are pseudonymous documents or homilies written in the name of or attributed to some famous individual, such as the Letter of Jeremiah, Aristeas, perhaps 2 Peter, and 2 Clement. The contents of these subcategories vary greatly. In the New Testament, Philemon is a combination of personal/pastoral and recommendation/official correspondence. Although it has a specified sender and addressees, Romans is a lengthy letter-essay or essay-letter. Ephesians reads more as a theological treatise and literary "epistle" rather than a functional letter.

---

reminds us of a third-century CE source that lists twenty-one kinds of letters (197) in Klauck, *Ancient Letters*. We, however, have honed the list (redundant in places) to six *basic* types, for our purposes. On Paul's official letter style, see M. L. Stirewalt, Jr., *Paul the Letter Writer* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003), chaps. 2–3.

Fixed Patterns

Letters of antiquity followed a basic pattern as they do today. In modern personal letters we see the following fixed forms:

1. Indication of place and date—Minneapolis, MN; October 18, 2013
2. Name of recipient—Dear Ahmed
3. Apology for not writing sooner
4. Statement of writer's good health and the hope that the recipient is in good health
5. Body
6. Salutation—"yours truly" with name of sender

In ancient letters we detect the following pattern:

1. Opening—sender/cosender, addressee(s), greeting
2. Thanksgiving, wish for health
3. Body—formal opening, background, followed by the business that occasioned the letter
4. Closing—greetings, (notation of autograph), wishes for other people, final greeting, wish or prayer, sometimes a date

Here is an example of an ancient person-to-person letter (son to father) using the above fixed form:

> *Opening*: Apion to Epimachus, his father and lord, heartiest greetings.
>
> *Thanksgiving*: First of all I pray that you are in health and continually prosper and fare well with my sister and her daughter and my brother.
>
> *Body*: I thank the lord Sarapis that when I was in danger at sea he saved me. Straightway upon entering Misenum I received traveling money from Caesar, three gold pieces. And I am well. I beg you therefore, honored father, write me a few lines, first regarding your health, secondly regarding that of my brother and sister, thirdly that I may welcome respectfully your hand [writing] . . .
>
> *Closing*: Greetings to Capito, to my brother and sister, to Sernilla and to my friends. I send you by Euctemon my portrait. My

> military name is Antonius Maximus. I pray for your good health. Athenonike Company.[4]

Paul's letters also have elements of official correspondence (e.g., a ruler to his constituents) that include cosenders (e.g., Timothy, Silvanus, Sosthenes), a lengthy letter body involving background for and explanation of the pertinent business to be discussed, and a closing subscription that may include an autograph notation (1 Cor 16:21; Gal 6:11; Phlm 19).[5] Paul also expands various portions and adds new features to the above person-to-person letter pattern. First, the thanksgiving section is usually expanded (e.g., 1 Thess 1:2–2:16; Phil 1:3-11). Second, pastoral or theological features are added to (a) an eschatological comment that concludes certain sections (1 Thess 3:11-13; 1 Cor 1:8-9), (b) mention of travel plans (1 Thess 2:17–3:13; Phil 2:19-24), (c) a section of *parenesis* or ethical exhortations (1 Thess 4:1–5:22; Rom 12:1–15:13; Eph 4:1–6:20), and (d) a doxology or benediction is included (2 Cor 13:13; Gal 6:18; 1 Thess 5:28; Rom 15:33; 16:20, 25-27). With these features in view, the following outline is the basic pattern of many New Testament letters.

1. Opening (sender, cosender, addressees, greeting)
2. Thanksgiving (often with a prayer of intercession and an eschatological ending)
3. Body (formal opening, background, explanation of business, often mentioning travel plans and an eschatological ending)
4. Parenesis (ethical exhortation)
5. Closing (greetings, autograph notation, doxology, benediction)

[4] Derived from *LAE*, 179–83; Klauck, *Ancient Letters*, 9–14 (with commentary).

[5] See Stirewalt, *Paul*, appendix, 134ff., for sample letters of official correspondence—e.g., Josephus, *Life* 216–18, 226–27; *Ant* 13.127–28; Demosthenes, *Or*. 18 (*De Corona)* 39; *Oxyrhynchus Papyrus* 2108 (259 CE). On the imperial letter of Claudius to the Alexandrians (with commentary), see Klauck, *Ancient Letters*, 83–101.

Fig. 5: Folio from Papyrus 46, containing 2 Corinthians 11:33–12:9.

The Use of the Letter Form by Early Christians

What types of letters were written by the apostle Paul? Using two examples from his undisputed letters we find a divergence of genres that might be viewed as extreme ends on a continuum. Paul's letter to Philemon is a personal and pastoral letter of recommendation with some aspect of official correspondence (e.g., cosender Timothy). It does not appear to be written as an "epistle" for a literary public but is

specifically addressed to Philemon, Apphia, Archippus, and their house-church. There are similar kinds of functional letters found among the Egyptian papyri. Paul's Letter to the Romans, although a genuine letter, is a letter essay with some similarities to the literary or philosophical "epistles" of Epicurus, Cicero, Seneca, and Plutarch.[6] This lengthy exposition of religious teaching and ethics was probably intended to be circulated in Rome and elsewhere.

Four Features of Official Correspondence

There are at least four common features of early Christian letters, mentioned earlier, that give them an official quality: (1) the use of an amanuensis or executive secretary (Rom 16:22; Paul's own greetings appended; e.g., 1 Cor 16:21; Gal 6:11; Phlm 19); (2) the frequent use of cosenders or coworkers as messengers who deliver the letters (e.g., Rom 16:1-2; 1 Cor 16:10; 2 Cor 8:16-18; Phlm 10-12; also Eph 6:21; Col 4:7); (3) the apostolic authority of the sender making the letter an official pronouncement (Rom 1:1, 11; 1 Cor 1:1; 2 Cor 1:1; Gal 1:1; also Eph 1:1); and (4) the associates of the sender are often included in the opening (1 Cor 1:1; 2 Cor 1:1; Phil 1:1; Phlm 1; also Col 1:1). The use of secretaries (Lat. *amanuenses*) and messengers is typical in ancient letters (e.g., Marcus Tullius Tiro, secretary of Cicero; Tertius in Rom 16:22). An amanuensis's role as the sender's coworker combined with the sender's apostolic authority give most early Christian letters an official quality not unlike that of a ruler's correspondence to his constituents.

[6] The letters attributed to the third-century BCE Greek philosopher Epicurus are in Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 10.35–38, 84–116, 122–35; Klauck, *Ancient Letters*, 149–55. On the letters of Roman orator and philosopher (first century BCE), see Cicero's *Letters to Atticus* and also to Quintus and Brutus, discussed in Klauck, 156–65; those of the first-century CE Greek biographer Plutarch are in his *Moralia* 478A; 502B; 783A; see also Aune, *Literary Environment* (1987), chap. 5, and his *Literature and Rhetoric* (2003), 162–68, 268–72. For a comparison of the ideas of Seneca's writings with those of Paul's letter to the Romans, 1 Peter, and 1 Clement, see Runar M. Thorsteinsson, *Roman Christianity and Roman Stoicism: A Comparative Study of Ancient Morality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

Eight Literary Forms

In the letters of Paul and other early Christians we find numerous literary forms within the letters, for instance:

1. *Autobiography*. These are statements about the sender's experiences and situation. In the case of Paul they refer to the travels and experiences of his apostolic ministry (2 Cor 1:8-10; 7:5; 12:1-10; Phil 1:12-14; 1 Thess 2:1-12). Some accounts also seek to defend his apostolic authority (Gal 1:11–2:14; 1 Cor 9).
2. *Apocalyptic Material*. These unveilings of the end-time refer to the Lord's coming, apostolic afflictions and trials, and other more typical features of the apocalyptic genre (e.g., angels, demons, new Jerusalem, final judgment). They also employ symbolic language and include visions, blessings, and special revelations. See, e.g., 1 Thess 4:13–5:11; 2 Thess 1:5-10; 2:1-17; 1 Cor 15:12-28; cf. Jude; 2 Pet 2–3; Rev; Dan, 2 Bar, 4 Ezra.
3. *Catalogues and Lists*. These include the Hellenistic lists of vices and virtues (e.g., Gal 5:19-23; Col 3:5-15; see Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 7:92–95; Plutarch, *Mor.* 3–4), household rules (e.g., Col 3:18–4:1; Eph 5:21–6:9; Titus 2:1-10), and rules for the community (e.g., 1 Tim 2; 5; 1 Pet 2:13–3:7). Some lists are merely descriptive and lead to threats of condemnation or a contrast with Christian behavior (Rom 1:18-32; 1 Cor 6:9-11). Other lists are parenetic and are utilized for teaching a moral code of behavior (Gal 5:16-24; Col 3:5-11).
4. *Catechesis*. Specific instruction on abstaining from evil and pursuing righteousness, for example, are found in 1 Thess 4:1-9; Col 3:8-14; Eph 4:22-25; and 1 Pet 1:13-22.
5. *Confessional Statements*. These brief honorific titles confessing faith in Jesus as God's agent are found in Rom 10:9; 1 Cor 11:23ff.; and 1 Tim 3:16.
6. *Hymns*. These traditional elements may have been fragments of songs originally used in worship. There are hymns about Christ (Phil 2:5-11; Col 1:15-20; 1 Pet 2:21-24) and baptism (Rom 6; Titus 3:4-7), to use two examples. Hymn-like passages usually distinguish themselves from their context by a conscious parallelism, unique vocabulary, and special grammatical features.

7. *Kerygma*. This pertains to specific preaching accounts about Christ. They often refer to prophetic fulfillment of Christ, his crucifixion, resurrection, exaltation, and the promise of his coming with a subsequent call to repentance (e.g., Rom 1:1-6; 1 Cor 15:1-7; Gal 1:3-4; see also Acts 2:22-36; 3:11-26; 10:36-43).
8. *Prophetic Denouncements*. Like the Hebrew prophetic writings, these include: (a) an introduction, (b) a statement of offense, (c) resulting punishment threatened, and (d) a hortatory conclusion (e.g., Gal 1:6-9; Rom 1:18-32; 1 Cor 5:1-13; 2 Thess 1:5-12; see Amos 8:4-8; Hos 4–5; Mic 6).

Four Stylistic Features

It is no surprise that the early Christian letters are replete with the stylistic habits and thought patterns of late antiquity. This diversity of literary and stylistic features include: (1) principles of literary balance, (2) figures of speech, (3) rhetorical devices, and (4) grammatical and stylistic peculiarities.

Literary Balance. Two types of literary balance found in Hebrew poetry and Hellenistic literature are evident in early Christian letters: regular and inverted parallelism.[7] Regular parallelism follows the AB:A'B' pattern where the elements of the second group are repeated in the same order as the first. In early Christian letters, as in Hebrew poetry, regular parallelism is usually confined to smaller units and involves contrasting as well as synonymous correspondence. The following pattern from 1 Corinthians 9:20 is an example of synonymous parallelism:

(A) To the Jews
  (B) I become as a Jew
    (C) in order to win the Jews.
(A') To those under the law
  (B') I became as one under the law
    (C') that might win those under the law.

[7] Gottwald, "Poetry, Hebrew," *IDB* 3, 830–35; Bauer, "Chiasm," *NIDB* 1, 587–88; Nils W. Lund, *Chiasmus in the New Testament* (1942; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1992); John Breck, *Shape of Biblical Language* (Yonkers, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1994); Charles Talbert, *Reading Corinthians* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2002), 16–17, 85–86; Adele Berlin, *The Dynamics of Biblical Parallelism*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008).

Here the *thoughts* of the first stanza (A, B, and C) are *repeated* with different words in the second stanza (A', B', and C'). Examples of antithetical or contrasting parallelism are found in Romans 4:25; 5:10; 1 Corinthians 7:29-34; 2 Corinthians 5:13.

Inverted/introverted parallelism, or chiasm, is another convention of balance detected in early Christian letters. This introverted A B:B' A' pattern also occurs in Greco-Roman and early Christian literature (e.g., Herodotus' *History*; Virgil's *Aeneid*; Luke-Acts). In Romans 2:6-11 we find the following chiastic pattern:

(A) God judges all (v 6)
  (B) the righteous receive eternal life (v 7)
    (C) the wicked receive wrath (v 8)
    (C') the wicked experience distress (v 9)
  (B') the good experience glory (v 10)
(A') God is impartial (v 11).

Figures of Speech. The language of the early Christian letters, and Hellenistic literature in general, abounds with symbolic words and images.[8] Therefore only a few examples of this nonliteral use of language will be given. We will look at the figures of comparison and contradiction, as well as rhetorical questions and assertions.

Figures of comparison occur when familiar images are employed to clarify, highlight, or dramatize the speaker's ideas by means of analogy or illustration. Comparisons are drawn from family relations, the human body, sickness and death, nature, various trades, war, and athletic contests. Figures of comparison include *simile*, where the comparison is expressed, and metaphor, where it is implied. Paul's use of simile can be seen in 1 Thessalonians 2:7, "like a nurse [Gk. *trophos*] tenderly caring for her own children." Other examples are found in Romans 9:27-29; 1 Corinthians 3:1; 4:13; 2 Corinthians 6:8-10; Galatians 4:14; Philemon 2:15b, 22. In *metaphors* there is greater semantic power. In Galatians 5:1, Paul states, "do not submit again to a yoke of slavery," and employs the imagery of slave constraints (cf. Sir 33:25-26) to

[8] For further study, see Aune, *Literature and Rhetoric*; James Bailey and Lyle D. Vander Broek, *Literary Forms in the New Testament* (WJK, 1992); Bullinger, *Figures of Speech*; G. B. Caird, *Language and Imagery of the Bible* (1980); Soulen, *Handbook*; Tate, *Interpreting the Bible*; Turner, *Style*, vol. 4 in Moulton, *Grammar*.

describe what, for the Galatians, is a futile lapse into the observances of Judaism. Paul also uses slave imagery positively to depict his obligatory relationship to Christ: Paul, a "slave [Gk. *doulos*] of Christ" (Gal 1:10; Rom 1:1). Other metaphors used by Paul are "sowing and reaping," "fruit of the Spirit," "body of Christ," and "stumbling block." These familiar images of everyday life were effective vehicles for conveying Paul's teaching.[9]

Figures of contradiction are irony and paradox. Irony, a statement that intends to convey its opposite meaning, occurs frequently in 2 Corinthians 10–13. In these chapters, Paul's dialogue with the boastful of Corinth is full of irony and sarcasm, a way analogous to a ridicule in the Socratic tradition (2 Cor 11:16-22; Plato *Symp*. 175E; see also 1 Cor 4:8; 6:4; 2 Cor 5:3; 12:13).

Paradox, or an apparent contradiction that may reveal some profound truth, occurs often. For Paul, the crucifixion is a foundational paradox (1 Cor 1:22-25). Paradoxical statements are also found in 1 Corinthians 7:22; 2 Corinthians 4:8-11; 5:17; 6:9-10; 12:10; Philemon 3:7; Romans 7:15, 19.

Rhetorical questions require no direct answer but are used by the speaker to attract the attention of the hearer. This provocative use of interrogation was widely employed by Hellenistic philosophers such as Seneca and Epictetus. Paul in Romans 6:15 asks: "What then? Should we sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means!" The answer, generally given, is self-evident, but the rhetorical device itself is effective in evoking a response. Rhetorical questions occur frequently in Romans (2:3-4, 21-23; 3:1-9, 27-29; 4:1; 6:1; 9:19; 11:1) and outside of Paul's letters, James (2:4, 6-7, 20-21, 25; 4:1, 4, 14).

Rhetorical assertions are numerous, so only a few examples will be given. *Hyperbole*, or exaggeration for the sake of emphasis, is found in Galatians 1:8: "But even if we or an angel from heaven should proclaim to you a gospel contrary to what we preached to you, let that one be accursed!" See also Galatians 4:15b; 5:12. Hyperbole is used often in prophetic denouncements or judicial indictments (e.g., Matt 23; Jas 5:1-6; cf. Isa 1–5; Amos 4–6). Assertions of understatement, called *meiosis* are also found in Galatians 5:23, "There is no

[9] Helpful here is Williams, *Paul's Metaphors*, which indicates the broad and diverse cultural sources (e.g., urban, rural, military, economic, judicial) that Paul used for his metaphorical analogies.

law against such things," and Romans 1:16, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel." Those understatements, the opposite of hyperbole, are used for emphasis or convey an ironic effect. Another form of understatement is *litotes*, which affirms a fact by denying its opposite: "they make much of you, but for no good purpose" (Gal 4:17). Litotes is also used in Acts (Acts 12:18; lit., "not the ordinary" 19:11; lit., "of no unimportant city" 21:39). This cautious use of language was effective in courtroom rhetoric (e.g., Lysias, *Against Hippotherses*, 400 BCE; the case of Horatius in Cicero, *Inv*. 2.26–27).

Rhetorical Devices. Rhetorical devices overlap with the previous category, since ancient techniques of effective speaking and persuasion employed much figurative language. First we will examine those dialogical and rhetorical features that Paul shares with the Hellenistic diatribe and *protreptic* rhetoric, then briefly look at the types of Hellenistic oratory that the letters of Paul include.

Some early Christian letters (e.g., Rom 2–11, Jas 2) seem to employ the dialogical features of the *diatribe*.[10] This form of discourse and conversation (Gk. *diatribē*) may have originated in philosophical schools, where a teacher would try to expose the errors of his students and lead them into truth. Most of the primary documents for the diatribe were written by teachers of philosophical schools: e.g., Teles Bion (third century BCE); Epictetus *Discourses* (first century CE); Musonius Rufus (first century CE); Plutarch (first through second centuries CE); Seneca *Moral Essays* (first century CE).

The diatribe envisions two audiences: real and imagined. The real audience is comprised of disciples of the author who are in need of further enlightenment. The imagined audience includes a fictitious dialogue partner or objector who represents a false viewpoint (e.g., Rom 2:3-4). The dialogue opens with an address of indignation (apostrophe) to this imaginary "interlocutor," who is usually a caricature of a proud or pretentious person and represents the false views of the real audience (Rom 2:1, 17). A dialogical exchange follows where the author resolves objections to his viewpoint or corrects false conclusions

[10] See Stowers, *Diatribe*; Changwon Song, *Reading Romans as a Diatribe*, SBLDS 59 (New York: Peter Lang, 2004); Malherbe, "*Mē Genoito* in the Diatribe and Paul," *HTR* 73 (1/2, 1980): 231–40; Robert Jewett and Roy D. Kotansky, *Romans*, Hermenia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 25–27; Aune, *Literature and Rhetoric*, 127–29.

drawn from his line of reasoning (3:1). These objections and false conclusions are usually raised by the imaginary interlocutor. The purpose of the dialogue is to lead the real audience to truth by exposing false thinking or behavior.

The above discussion of diatribe may have significance for understanding the argumentation in Romans and James. Both seem to employ similar dialogical features. Paul and the author of James might have used the diatribe to expose error and lead their readers into a deeper commitment to the Christian life.

Related to diatribe and especially *paraenetic* (hortatory) language, but perhaps more forceful or intentional, is protreptic rhetoric, promoting a *particular course* of action (Gk. *protreptein*, "to urge, impel"), even calling the audience to a new way of life. In a speech attributed to the Stoic Epictetus (first to second century CE), he contrasts responsible Stoics with those who would flatter people rather than recommend to them the right way to live (Arrian *Epict. Diss.* 3.23). We see protreptic used in literature from another philosophical school as well. A good Cynic is to teach and live by the sober realities of life (Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 77/78.38; Crates, *Letter* 35).[11] In a similar use of protreptic, Paul sought to convince his readers of the truth of his gospel (e.g., Rom 1:16-17; 2:16; 16:25; 1 Cor 1:10-17; Gal 1:6-9; 1 Tim 4:7b-10) and to encourage their commitment to a lifestyle that Paul considered consistent with his gospel (Rom 12–14; Gal 5–6; 1 Cor 13:4-7). See also the second-century CE work, Justin Martyr's *Dialogue with Trypho* on the errors of Platonism (3.1–6.2) and Christianity as the *true* philosophy (7.1–9.3), or the so-called "Letter to Diognetus" (ca. 200 CE), which ridicules two non-Christian religious options (2–4) and attempts to persuade the reader on the benefits of becoming a Christian (5–10).[12] Since Paul had not yet been to Rome to make disciples when he wrote his letter to the Romans, some have argued that it therefore contains much protreptic rhetoric.[13]

[11] Examples of the protreptic style (mentioned above) are found in Elliott and Reasoner, *Documents and Images* (Fortress, 2011), 70–73. For discussion, see Stanley K. Stowers, *Letter Writing in Greco-Roman Antiquity*, LEC 5 (1986), 91–92.

[12] "Protreptic Literature" in Aune, *Literature and Rhetoric*, 385.

[13] *Idem*, "Romans as *Logos Protreptikos*," in Donfried, *Romans Debate*, 278–96.

Since the NT letters are primarily written dialogues and discourses, and many are sermons in letter form, they have close affinities with Hellenistic oratory. According to the influential works on persuasion and public speaking by Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian, there were different types of speeches characterized by a certain arrangement.[14] Political speeches and funeral orations concerned with merits and honor were called epideictic or demonstrative. Their function to display common virtues and values is similar to the purpose of Paul's letter to the Romans (cf. Colossians, Ephesians, Jude, 2 Peter, 2 Timothy). Courtroom or judicial speeches concerned with justice, (accusatory or defensive), coincide well with the apologetic functions of Galatians 1–4 and 2 Corinthians 10–13. Speeches that provide advice for future decisions were labeled deliberative or symboleutic. First Corinthians 7–16, where Paul provides specific advice to his readers, seems to fit this category (see also 2 Cor 8–9, Phlm, Heb, Jas, 1 Tim, Titus).

The arrangement of these types of speeches falls into the basic pattern of: (a) introduction or exordium (e.g., Gal 1:6-10; Rom 1:1-15); (b) *propositio* or thesis to be demonstrated (Rom 1:16-17; Gal 1:11-12); (c) the facts of the case or *narratio* (Gal 1:11–2:14); (d) argumentation, called *probatio* (Gal 3:1–4:31) or confirmation (Rom 1:18–15:13); and (e) closing summation or *peroratio* (Gal 6:11-18; Rom 15:14–16:23).

Stylistic Peculiarities. The following examples of stylistic peculiarities will be examined: (a) abrupt changes in syntax and thought, (b) unclear idioms, and (c) borrowings from the Septuagint (LXX). Abrupt changes in syntax and thought occur frequently in Paul's letters. The technical term for such a sudden break is the Greek term *anacoluthon*, but sometimes this phenomenon can be interpreted as either a parenthesis (i.e., a clause inserted into a sentence without regard for

[14] On Hellenistic rhetoric and the NT, see Betz, *Galatians*; Kennedy, *NT Rhetorical Criticism* (1984) and his *Progymnasmata* (2003); Wuellner, "Where Is Rhetorical Criticism Taking Us?" *CBQ* 49, no. 3 (1987): 448–63; Stanley Porter and Dennis Stamps, *Rhetorical Criticism and the Bible* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002); Ben Witherington, *New Testament Rhetoric: An Introductory Guide to the Art of Persuasion in and of the New Testament* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2009); Aune, *Literature and Rhetoric*, 414–25. Because Paul employed so many of the figurative and stylistic features (that we mentioned) in his letters (typical of Hellenistic literature), Stanley Porter concludes that Paul must have had some exposure to Hellenistic rhetoric, "Paul of Tarsus and His Letters," in *Handbook of Classical Rhetoric*, 576–84.

its syntax) or an interpolation (i.e., a block of inserted material by the author or a later editor).

An example of anacoluthon is found in Romans 2:15-16, where Paul is talking about the conscience of the Gentiles serving them as a moral umpire but suddenly breaks in with "on that day when, according to my gospel, God, through Jesus Christ, will judge the secret thoughts of all." The change of thought, as well as sentence structure, is sudden and unexpected. It may be either intentional or unintentional, being either a stylistic device to arouse the reader's attention or the result of an author's loss of his train of thought as a new idea suddenly bursts into his thought flow. Other examples of anacolutha are 2 Corinthians 1:22-23; Galatians 2:4-6; and the long digression in 2 Corinthians 5:14–6:2.

Parenthetical phrases are often noted in English translations: e.g., Romans 1:13 ("but thus far have been prevented"); 2 Corinthians 11:21 ("—I am speaking as a fool—"); 2 Peter 2:8 (entire verse). An interpolation (or gloss) is a larger insertion of material disrupting the original flow of thought. It is either the work of the author or a later editor. In 2 Corinthians, for example, it has been argued that 6:14–7:1 is an interpolation by a later editor, because (a) there is no direct connection of 6:14–7:1 to what precedes or follows, (b) 2 Corinthians 6:13 and 7:2 connect smoothly without the passage, and (c) the vocabulary and conceptions in 6:14–7:1 are never or rarely used by Paul elsewhere (leading to the hypothesis that it is non-Pauline). Examples of other possible interpolations are Philippians 3:2–4:3 (a later polemical fragment by Paul?) and 1 Thessalonians 2:13-16 (a post-70 denouncement of the Jews?).

Idiomatic expressions are unclear to modern readers for at least two reasons. First, they are cultural statements foreign to us. Second, the sender often assumes his intended readers are already familiar with their meanings. Remember that we are outsiders reading these ancient letters from a third-party perspective. One random example is in Galatians 3:20, translated literally: "now the mediator involves more than one party, but God is one." In v. 19 Paul is speaking of the law being ordained by angels through a mediator, but commentators are unclear about what inference Paul is trying to establish in v. 20. For other examples of unclear idioms, the meanings of which are important for understanding the overall arguments, see Romans 3:3-7 (paradox?); 8:22 (common opinion?); 1 Corinthians 2:14-16 (divine gnosis?); 15:29 (common practice?).

Borrowings from the LXX are numerous in early Christian letters. Over seventy direct quotations from the Jewish Scriptures are made in Paul's letters, predominately from the Greek translation, the LXX, rather than the Hebrew text itself. Sometimes explicit mention is made of a source (e.g., "as it is written," Rom 1:17; 12:19-20; Gal 4:27; "Scripture," Rom 4:3; Gal 4:30; "David," Rom 4:6-8; "Isaiah," 9:29; 10:16; "Moses," 10:5; 1 Cor 9:9), but frequently the sources are not stated (e.g., Rom 10:13; 1 Cor 2:16; 5:13; 10:26). There are places in the letters of Paul where his entire discussion is permeated with a wide variety of lengthy scriptural quotations: e.g., Romans 9–11 (citing Exod, Lev, Deut, 1 Kgs, Isa, Jer, Hos, Joel, Pss). Generally such passages are the most difficult to interpret because the modern reader is unfamiliar with Paul's methods of interpreting the Jewish Scriptures.[15] Many of Paul's awkward sentence constructions are also due to his use of LXX or Semitic phrasings (Rom 10:5-17). What has been mentioned here of Paul's letters also applies to the non-Pauline correspondence, since all make ample use of the LXX, although the selection of passages and their interpretations might differ.

Richard B. Hays has noted that Paul usually uses his Scriptures in an ecclesiocentric rather than Christocentric way. That is, Paul quotes from the Old Testament to show that what it says about Israel has significance or points ahead to the identity and place of the church in this world.[16] By contrast, it appears that Hebrews uses the Old Testament in a more Christocentric way, quoting Scripture to argue, for example, that Christ is the superior mediator (Heb 1–4). The letter of James, however, uses the Old Testament to support its particular configuration of wisdom and ethics (e.g., Jas 1–2).

[15] E. E. Ellis, *Paul's Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1957; repr., Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1981); Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis*, 6–35, 88–139; G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson, *Commentary on New Testament Use of Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2007), 607–812; Carol Bakhos, "Midrash, Midrashim," *EDEJ* (2010), 944–49; W. R. Stegner, "Midrash," *JSNT* 22 (1984): 37–52; Hays, *Echoes of Scripture*, chaps. 1–2, and his *Conversion of Imagination* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005), 25–49.

[16] Hays, *Echoes of Scripture*, 84–87.

The Pauline Letters' Impact on the New Testament Canon[17]

Besides outnumbering all other types of writings included in the New Testament, the Pauline letters[18] have left a definite, though often unnoticed, stamp on other New Testament writings.

Similarity in Content

Some of Paul's writings seem to have had a positive influence on the letter of 1 Peter. The section on submission to human authorities in 1 Peter 2:13-17 begins and ends with the verbs that bracket Romans 13:1-7, and in the paragraph that follows, the direction on what sort of authority to obey seems to respond to the question that Paul leaves unanswered in Romans 13—how do believers respond to governments or authorities that are patently unjust?

In addition, 1 Peter 2:10 quotes the same texts from Hosea as Romans 9:25-26. The stone of stumbling text from Isaiah 28:16 is used both in Romans 9:32-33 and in 1 Peter 2:6-8. In its conclusion, 1 Peter asks the audience to greet one another with a kiss of love, which may be an adaptation of the "holy kiss" found in the farewell section of four Pauline letters (Rom 16:16; 1 Cor 16:20; 2 Cor 13:12; 1 Thess 5:26; 1 Pet 5:14). These similar quotations do not prove that 1 Peter is dependent on Romans, but in view of the verbal connections mentioned in the paragraph above, there seems to exist some literary relationship between Romans and 1 Peter.

[17] Although Paul intended for some of his letters to be circulated among the churches (1 Thess 5:27; cf. Col 4:16), it is no indication that Paul was conscious of producing "canonical" scriptures. Trobisch, *Paul's Letter Collection: Tracing the Origins* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), based on his dissertation (1989), argues from external manuscript evidence and internal analysis that Paul authorized certain of his letters for publication (Rom, 1–2 Cor, Gal), which led to an extended edition (by his disciples) after his death (Eph, Phil, Col, 1–2 Thess). It culminated in a later comprehensive edition (Heb, 1–2 Tim, Titus, Phlm) analogous to the letter collections initiated by Cicero and Seneca. Although this approach is new (and complex), it ignores other well-attested forms of the collection; see L. M. McDonald and J. A. Sanders, eds., *The Canon Debate* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2002), 282–87, 311–12.

[18] Discussion of the influence of the so-called "authentic" (or undisputed) letters of Paul (Rom, 1–2 Cor, Gal, Phil, Phlm, 1 Thess) on the Deutero-Pauline and post-Pauline (or disputed) letters will be made later in our chapters treating each letter.

It is noteworthy that the epistle to the Hebrews also includes several topics discussed in Paul's letters. Hebrews seems to develop or extend Paul's arguments regarding the Mosaic Law in Galatians 3 and Romans 4. Whereas Paul argues in those passages for the priority of the Abrahamic covenant in relation to the Mosaic covenant, Hebrews seeks to marginalize the Mosaic covenant by comparing it to the new covenant (Heb 8:3-13; 10:1-4, 11-18). Also, while Paul employs the language of the temple cult to portray Christ and his redemptive work (Rom 3:25; 1 Cor 5:7), Hebrews argues for the superiority of Christ's sacrifice over that of the mercy seat in the old covenant legislation (Heb 9:5, 13-14). In addition, Hebrews includes the "God of peace" title in its closing benediction, which is found in benedictions or conclusions in a critical mass of Paul's letters (Heb 13:20; cf. Rom 15:33; 16:20; 2 Cor 13:11; Phil 4:9; 1 Thess 5:23; 2 Thess 3:16; Heb 13:20). In the letter's postscript, "Timothy," Paul's associate, is mentioned (Heb 13:23; cf. 1 Cor 4:17; 2 Cor 1:1; Phil 1:1). Such similarities may have impressed Clement of Alexandria (ca. 200 CE) to attribute, with some qualification, the authorship of Hebrews to Paul.[19]

Direct Response to Paul's Letters

The explicit mention of Paul's letters in 2 Peter 3:15-16 shows that its author can assume the letter's audience knows of a collection of Paul's letters. The description of them also shows that the author of 2 Peter includes them with "the rest of the Scriptures" and knows that these letters have already prompted differences of interpretation.

James 2:14-26 directly challenges the idea of "faith without works," quoting a favorite Scripture of Paul's, Genesis 15:6. It seems likely that James is correcting a misunderstanding of Paul's letters that regards human behavior as inconsequential for a person's approach to God,

[19] According to Eusebius of Caesarea (260–339 CE), Clement thought that it was written by Paul "in Hebrew for Hebrews but translated carefully by Luke for Greeks," *Eccl. Hist.* 6.14.2–3. Eusebius also includes the view of Origen of Alexandria, Clement's successor (third century CE), who concludes that although the thoughts may be the apostle's, the style and construction reflect those of someone else, concluding that "who wrote the epistle God only knows," 6.25.11–12. Although the suggestion of certain "Pauline thoughts" in Hebrews has intrigued some in the academy, most would concur with Origen's doubts on who wrote the epistle.

a misunderstanding that Paul himself attempts to address in Romans (Rom 3:8; 6:1-2).[20]

It has also been suggested that the warning of breaking one of the least of the commandments of the kingdom and teaching others to do the same is an indirect attack on Paul, since the Latin name *Paulus* means "little," a term that is integral in the critique of the one who would seek to throw out one of the least of the commandments (Matt 5:19).[21] This is difficult to prove, but it does fit with Paul's public relations problem[22] so evident in the texts from Romans cited above.

We conclude this section by simply noting that there is literary evidence for various imprints or effects that the Pauline letters have prompted in the rest of the New Testament. This suggests that there is some value in reading the New Testament as a conversation rather than as a string of disjointed pronouncements.

The Pauline Letters' Impact on the Church

We have already observed above how Paul uses his Scriptures, what we call the Old Testament. Paul is not interested in proving that the Old Testament prophets predicted Jesus the Messiah. This is an interest in certain sections of our gospels, but not in Paul's letters. Instead, Paul is interested in establishing some continuity between his congregations who are worshiping the God of Israel and the Israel that is addressed and depicted in the Jewish Scriptures. Especially in Romans, 1 Corinthians, and Galatians, the connection between Paul's Gentile churches and the Israel of the Jewish Scriptures is emphasized (Rom 4:1-24; 9:6-26; 1 Cor 10:1-11; Gal 3:5-18). The gospels, the other letters of the New Testament, and the book of Revelation assume this spiritual and salvation-historical connection between the Israel of the Old Tes-

[20] For further discussion of how the Catholic Epistles (James, 1–2 Peter, 1–3 John, Jude) are a response to Paul's letters, see David R. Nienhuis, *Not By Paul Alone: The Formation of the Catholic Epistle Collection and the Christian Canon* (Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press, 2007).

[21] H. D. Betz, *Essays on the Sermon on the Mount* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 199), 51, citing J. Weiss, *Earliest Christianity*, vol. 2 (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1959), 753; R. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, vol. 1 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951), 54.

[22] For more on Paul's critics in antiquity (both Christian and pagan), see Meeks and Fitzgerald, *St. Paul* (2007), 228–72.

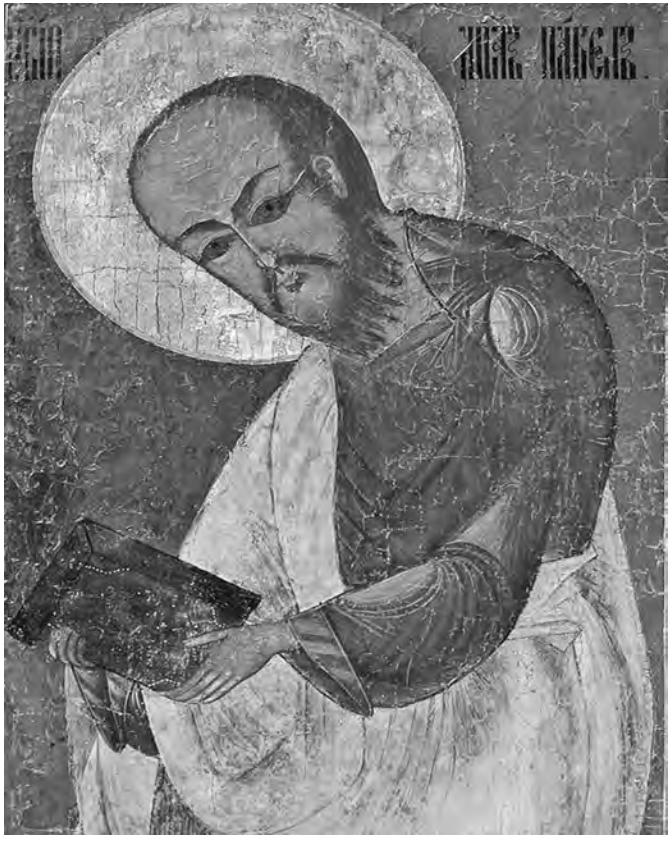


Fig. 6: Apostle Paul. Russian Orthodox icon from the beginning of the nineteenth century. Fragment from the church iconostasis (deesis row). Northern Russia or the Baltic region. Wood, primer (paint), and tempera. Original size: 107 x 43 cm.

tament and the communities of Gentiles and Jews who follow Jesus, but it is Paul who makes the connection explicit.

Because Paul makes this connection explicit, he even has to address in very direct terms the phenomenon that especially bothered him: most of his fellow Jews were not following Jesus as the messiah. In his consideration of this phenomenon, he concludes that God has not forgotten the promises made to Israel in her Scriptures and that in the end "all Israel will be saved" (Rom 11:25-26). This is foundationally significant for the church, for it articulates the church's ontological dependence on Israel. Israel must continue to be a viable partner in God's plan for the world if the church is to continue to worship Israel's God.

A second point of impact that Paul's letters have on the church is that they forge a bond between the church today and the first believers in the churches Paul planted. When we read Paul's letters as Scripture, we read them both to understand what they were saying to their first audience and to hear what they are saying to us. The former goal may be called the literal sense of the letters. To read them for what they are saying to us involves a step that goes beyond the literal sense. It involves a transposition into our situations.

Saint John Chrysostom loved the apostle Paul. The story circulated, and it is confirmed by Christian art that has survived, that when Chrysostom was preparing sermons on Paul's letters, Paul would appear at his side, helping Chrysostom to exegete correctly.[23] While we may not expect Paul to appear before us today and help us in our exegesis, Paul's letters do link us to him and to the varied communities he founded. This function forms a deep mark on our own self-understanding as Christians, and if Paul would have his way, it should produce definite changes in how we follow Christ: "Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ" (1 Cor 11:1).

> Who, then, is there to pray over us, since Paul has departed? These who are the imitators of Paul. Only let us yield ourselves worthy of such intercession, that it may not be that we hear Paul's voice here only, but that hereafter, when we are departed, we may be counted worthy to see the wrestler of Christ. Or rather, if we hear him here, we shall certainly see him hereafter, if not as standing near him, yet see him we certainly shall, glistening near the throne of the king. Where the cherubim sing the glory, where the seraphim are flying, there shall we see Paul, with Peter, and as a chief and leader of the choir of the saints, and shall enjoy his generous love. For if when here he loved men so, that when he had the choice of departing and being with Christ, he chose to be here, much more will he there display a warmer affection.[24]

[23] See Margaret M. Mitchell, *The Heavenly Trumpet: John Chrysostom and the Art of Pauline Interpretation* (WJK, 2002). For a (modern) iconic reproduction of the apostle Paul standing over St. John Chrysostom, who is interpreting the Letters of Paul, see http://lightoftheeast.org/icon-of-st-john-chrysostom-interpreting-the-epistles-of-st-paul/.

[24] St. John Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Epistle to the Romans*, Homily 32, 347–407 CE.

CHAPTER 3

A Chronology of Paul's Life

The problems of Pauline chronology are similar to those in the study of Jesus. Evidence is limited and scattered, and the sources are often dominated by other literary and theological purposes. Factors that are distinctive for a chronology of Paul are: (1) we have the apostle's own words about certain events in his life, (2) references to Paul's life in Acts sometimes coincide with statements in Paul's letters, and (3) an ancient inscription seems to fit the Lukan account of Paul's appearance before Gallio (Acts 18:12-17).

The document of primary importance in determining a chronology of Paul is the Gallio Inscription found at Delphi, Greece (Achaia). Gallio's proconsulship of Achaia, mentioned in Acts 18:12-22, is independently attested by this document and can be dated within narrow limits. The inscription, with conjectural supplements in brackets, reads as follows:

> Tiberius [Claudius] Caesar Augustus Germanicus [Pontifex Maximus, in his tribunician] power [year 12, acclaimed Emperor for] the 26th time, father of the country, [consul for the 5th time, censor, sends greetings to the city of Delphi.] I have long been zealous for the city of Delphi [and favorable to it from the] beginning, and I have always observed the cult of the [Pythian] Apollo, [but with regard to] the present stories, and those quarrels of the citizens of which [a report has been made by Lucius] Junios Gallio my friend, and [pro] consul [of Achaea]. . . .[1]

[1] From Barrett, *NT Background*, 48–49, and Kirsopp Lake, "Chronology of Acts," in *BC* 5, 461; for helpful discussion, see Rainer Riesner, *Paul's Early Period: Chronology, Mission Strategy, Theology*, trans. Doug Stott (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 202–11.

A knowledge of stereotyped titles in official inscriptions confirms that the addressor is Claudius, who became emperor on January 25, 41 CE. The acclamations were irregular but from other inscriptions we learn that he was acclaimed emperor for the twenty-second, twenty-third, and twenty-fourth times in his eleventh year of reign (51 CE) and that the twenty-seventh acclamation took place in the second half of his twelfth year of reign (52 CE before August).[2]

Fig. 7: Statue of the Apostle Paul, Rome, at the Constantinian Basilica of St. Paul. Outside-the-Walls, Rome; the fourth-century basilica was destroyed by fire and rebuilt in the nineteenth century. Photo by Ralph Harris.

The twenty-sixth acclamation must, therefore, have taken place at the close of the eleventh year (51 CE) or probably the first half of the twelfth year—between January 25 and August 1, 52 CE. Achaia was a senatorial province, governed by a proconsul, who was customarily appointed by the senate for a one-year term. The one-year appointments were made in early summer (July 1 under Emperor Tiberius). Even though alternative dates have been suggested within the 50 to 53

[2] Lake, "Chronology," *BC 5*, 462–63; Riesner, *Paul's Early Period*, 208.

CE limit, a convincing case has been made for the Gallio proconsulship of Achaia from July 1, 51, to July 1, 52, CE.[3] Paul's appearance before Gallio (Acts 18:12-17) was probably soon after his accession to office (July 51). It would be an opportune occasion for Paul's opponents to gain a fresh hearing and possibly influence the decision of the new proconsul.

Before examining key events in Paul's life, we must state at the outset that alongside the Gallio reference in Acts, priority will be given to the data found in Paul's letters. There are a number of reasons for proceeding in this manner.[4] First, Paul's letters are the earliest data available, predating the Acts of the Apostles by decades. Second, the details of the letters are not motivated by chronological considerations or any assumption regarding the periodization of the church's history. Third, material from the letters is primary historical data and therefore has intrinsic priority over the more secondary information we find in the Acts of the Apostles (which is apologetic history from a later perspective).

These reasons do not imply that the data in Paul's letters are free from apologetic and theological influences nor that Acts does not include historical information. The data in the letters, however, are closer historically to the events—they are the apostle's own words about his own life, and, thus, they qualify as eyewitness material. Therefore, a general outline of Paul's life will be first worked out from the data of the letters of Paul. Material from Acts is valuable for our Pauline chronology only when it does not seem to conflict with the evidence found in the letters.[5]

[3] Jewett, *Chronology*, 38–40; Gerd Lüdemann, *Paul, Apostle to the Gentiles: Studies in Chronology*, trans. F. Stanley Jones (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 163–64, endnotes 185–86.

[4] Derived from Jewett, *Chronology*, 22–24, *NIDB* 1, 634–36; see also John Knox, *Chapters in the Life of Paul*, rev. ed., intro. Douglas R. A. Hare (1950; Macon, GA: Mercer, 1987), 17–28; Lüdemann, *Paul*, 1–43; for survey of different approaches, see Riesner, *Paul's Early Period*, 3–28.

[5] On the alleged discrepancies between Acts and Paul's letters, see Philip Vielhauer, "On the 'Paulinism' of Acts," in Keck and Martyn, eds., *Studies in Luke-Acts* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1966), 33–50; and Lüdemann, *Paul*, 23–29, endnotes 41–43. For a chronology based on the framework of Acts, though, see Colin Hemer, *The Book of Acts in the Setting of Hellenistic History* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 251–70. For arguments that Acts

Conversion and Call, 34 CE

The primary data for Paul's conversion and call are found in Galatians 1:15-16 and 1 Corinthians 15:8. Later evidence supporting this event is narrated in a more idealized and dramatic manner in Acts 9:1-9; 22:6-21; 26:12-18.[6] In Galatians 1:15-16, this is identified as the initial event of Paul's missionary career. It includes a call from God (1:15) and a revealing of God's Son to Paul (1:16). This revelation is identified in 1 Corinthians 15:8 as a final appearance of the resurrected Christ to his followers. Even though the data from Acts do not include the appearance of Christ as the last of the post-Easter appearances and include details (e.g., Ananias, blindness, charismata) that are not mentioned in Paul's letters, they agree in the following areas: first, Paul was previously a persecutor of the church (Gal 1:13; 1 Cor 15:9; Acts 9:1-5; 26:9-11); second, the vision of Christ is connected with Paul's missionary call to the Gentiles (Gal 1:16; Acts 26:16); and third, the whole event is connected with the Syrian city of Damascus (Gal 1:17; Acts 9; 22; 26).

The Pauline connection to the appearance of Christ as the last post-Easter appearance (beyond "forty days," Acts 1:3) has some extrabiblical support. From Gnostic and early Christian sources there is a tradition of the postresurrection appearances of Christ extending eighteen months. The Gnostic traditions found in Irenaeus's *Against Heresies* state that postresurrection appearances lasted eighteen months.[7]

---

contains evidence of a knowledge of Paul's letters (which raises issues for Acts as an "independent" chronological witness) see Richard I. Pervo, *Dating Acts: Between the Evangelists and the Apologists* (Santa Rosa, CA: Polebridge, 2006), chap. 4, and his *The Making of Paul: Constructions of the Apostle in Early Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2010), 150–53, endnotes on 334. Pervo explains the numerous differences and "omissions" as Luke's selective and creative use of Paul's letters for his own agenda.

[6] For discussion of the similarities and discrepancies of Acts 9, 22, and 26, along with Paul's letters, see Gerhard Lohfink, *Conversion of St. Paul*, ed. Bruce J. Malina (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1976), 20–26; Charles Hedrick, "Paul's Conversion/Call," *JBL* 100, no. 3 (1981): 415–32. Pervo suggests that Luke is "the first harmonizer of both Acts and Galatians," in his *Dating Acts* (2006), 108–11.

[7] This tradition is found among the Gnostic disciples of Ptolemaeus (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 1.3.2) and the Gnostic Ophites (ibid, 1.30.14).

The second-century Christian work the *Ascension of Isaiah* mentions post-Easter appearances lasting 545 days (9.16).[8] The second-century Christian Gnostic *Apocryphon of James* refers to 550 days of resurrection appearances (2.20–21).[9] This eighteen-month (ca. 540-day) period may be a historical recollection derived from Pauline tradition.[10]

Basing the dating of Paul's conversion/call on the argument for Jesus' crucifixion in 33 CE,[11] we arrive at October of 34 CE, eighteen months after the Passover (April; the church celebrates the conversion of Paul on January 25, but the date of this liturgical celebration is not a claim that this is exactly when the event occurred). As we proceed in dating the other key events in Paul's life, the 34 CE conversion/call will find further support.

First Jerusalem Visit, 37 CE

Paul states in Galatians 1:17-18 that after his conversion/call, he went into Arabia, returned to Damascus, then "after three years" went to Jerusalem for the first time. Second Corinthians 11:32-33 describes this departure from Damascus as an escape from the ethnarch of King Aretas, who guarded the city to seize him. Acts 9:22-26 supports the Damascus-Jerusalem sequence of Galatians without referring to the Arabian trip and also describes the Damascus escape without mentioning the ethnarch of King Aretas.

If Paul's conversion/call was 34 CE, and he left Damascus for Jerusalem "after three years," with his first Jerusalem visit taking place around 37 CE, is there any datum to substantiate the date for this trip? The historical allusion to the ethnarch of King Aretas guarding Damascus to seize Paul (2 Cor 11:32) may provide this support. The crucial issue will concern the extent of Aretas's rule around 37 CE.

Did the Nabatean King Aretas have jurisdiction over Damascus around year 37? His rule over Nabatea and other regions was from 9

[8] Schneemelcher, ed., *NT Apocrypha* 2:615.

[9] Robinson, *Nag Hammadi Library*, 30.

[10] Jewett, *Chronology*, 29. See also Riesner, *Paul's Early Period*, 64–74.

[11] Scholars defending a 33 CE crucifixion are Bo Reicke, *The New Testament Era: The World of the Bible from 500 B.C. to A.D. 100* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1968), 183–84; Hoehner, *Chronological*, 103–14; Jewett, *Chronology*, 26–29, 119, n. 28.

BCE to his death in 39 CE.[12] If Aretas had control over Damascus, it probably did not occur until after the death of Tiberius Caesar (March 37 CE). Tiberius discouraged native client kingdoms and favored Herod Antipas over Aretas in a border conflict between the two in 36 CE. However, after the death of Tiberius in March of 37, there seemed to be a change in frontier policy under Emperor Gaius Caligula. This change of policy would provide a favorable setting for Nabatean control of Damascus. Gaius reestablished a system of client kings in the east, refrained from any punitive measures against Aretas for the 36 CE border dispute, and even adopted a friendly attitude toward the Nabatean king.[13] It was probably during this favorable change of policy after March 37 CE that Damascus would have been transferred to Nabatean control (2 Cor 11:32). Paul's escape therefore occurred sometime within the two-year span up to the death of King Aretas in 39 CE.

Our discussion provides some support for dating Paul's first Jerusalem visit at 37 (or 38) CE. It also helps to substantiate the 34 conversion/call date three years earlier (Gal 1:15-18). Further confirmation for these dates will be provided when interlocked with other events in Paul's life.

Missionary Activity, 37–51 CE

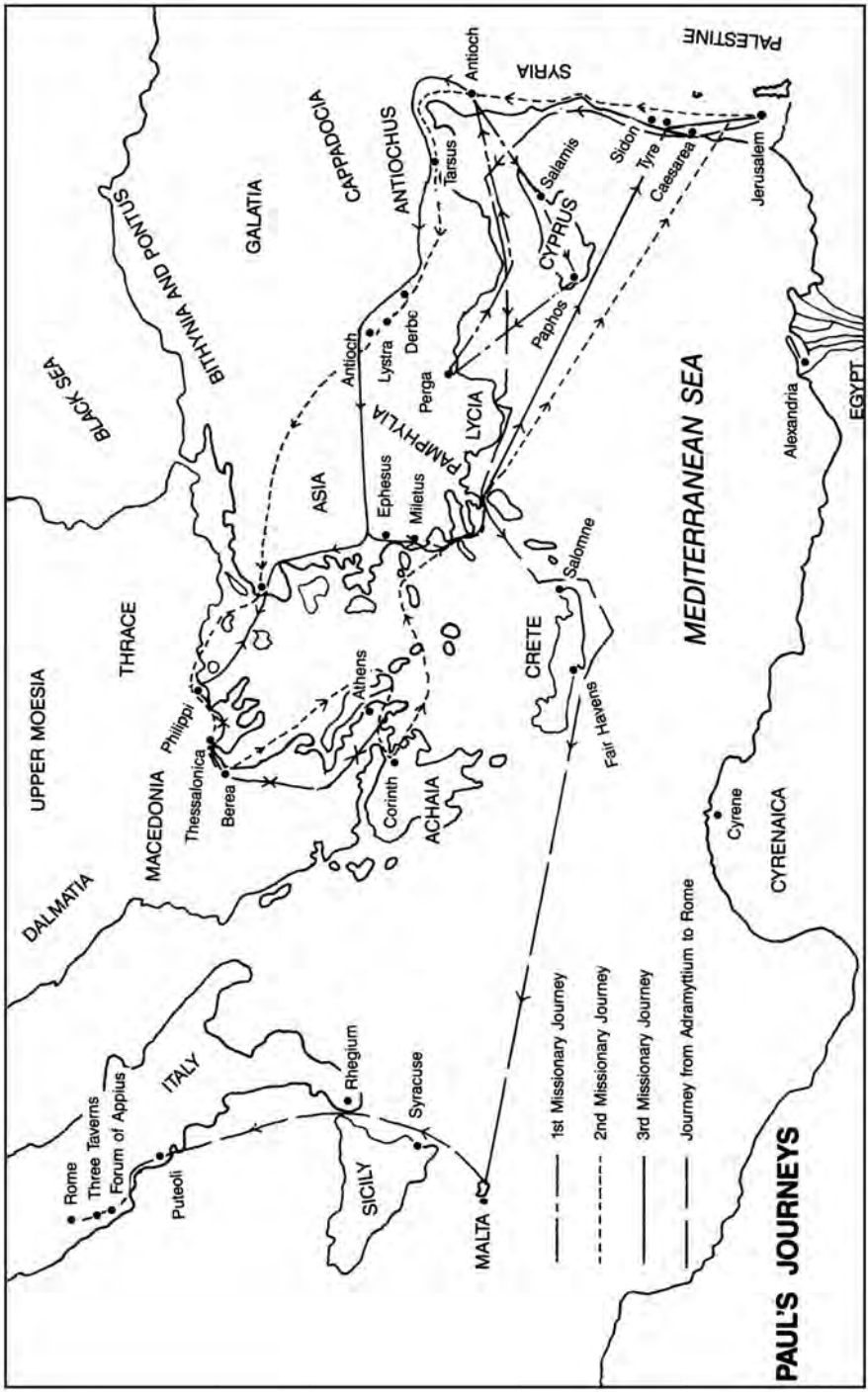
The time frame for this period is based on the fourteen-year span between the two Jerusalem trips, mentioned in Galatians 1:21; 2:1. After the first Jerusalem trip, Paul goes into the regions of Syria and Cilicia (1:21) and "after fourteen years" returns to Jerusalem (2:1).[14] The references to Syria and Cilicia in Galatians 1:21 find support in the descriptions of Paul's trip to Tarsus of Cilicia in Acts 9:30 and his presence in Antioch of Syria, Acts 11:25-26; 13:1-2. However, there is no indication that Paul is attempting to be exhaustive in Galatians 1:21.[15] Therefore, most of the missionary activities graphically portrayed in Acts 13–14 and 15:36–18:22 probably occurred at this time.

[12] Josephus, *Ant.* 16.293–99; 18.109–15; *War*, 1.574–77; Jewett, *Chronology*, 30–33, 121; but Riesner, *Paul's Early Period*, 75–89, is less confident here.

[13] See Jewett, *Chronology*, 31–33, although Riesner finds evidence lacking here, *Paul's Early Period*, 82–83.

[14] Discussion of the Jerusalem trips mentioned in Acts 11:27-30; 15; and Galatians 2:1-10 will be discussed below.

[15] Betz regards Galatians 1:13–2:14 as the narratio of Paul's apologetic letter. According to Cicero, the narratio ought to be brief, clear, and plausible,



Map B: Journeys of St. Paul

The date of Paul's second visit to Jerusalem coincides with his appearance before Gallio in Corinth (51 CE). According to Acts, after Paul is acquitted by Gallio, he sailed for Syria (Acts 18:18), stopping at Ephesus, Caesarea, and the church in Jerusalem (Acts 18:22).

As we have argued at the beginning of this chapter, the summer of 51 CE would have been an opportune time for Paul's opponents to present the apostle before the newly appointed proconsul. The most we can miscalculate on this point is one year (e.g., 50 or 52).

We have placed both missionary journeys of Paul (Acts 13–14; 15:36; 18:22) into the fourteen-year framework for the following reasons. First, we have taken seriously the fourteen-year time span (Gal 1:21; 2:1) without resorting to fractions of years (resulting in an aggregate of 12 or 13 years), where part of a year may be reckoned as a whole year.[16] Second, we also took seriously Paul's busy itinerary in Acts 15:31–18:1. This "second missionary journey" of Paul includes over fifteen stops and covers over twenty-eight hundred miles. Because Paul traveled on land, by foot, and by sea in ancient Roman boats, this journey would involve several years with stops and stays in various destinations.[17]

The narrative arrangement of Acts places the first missionary journey (chapters 13–14) before the Jerusalem conference (chapter 15). The second journey follows the Jerusalem conference and ends with Paul leaving Corinth (Acts 15:36–18:22). The Jerusalem conference

---

De Invent. 1.20.28; Quintilian adds that some cases require a brief summary instead of a full statement of facts, *Inst*. 4.2.5. See H. D. Betz, "Literary Compositions," *NTS* 21 (1975): 362–67; Lüdemann also concurs, *Paul*, 54–59. Kennedy sees narratio here but in the context of deliberative, not apologetic rhetoric, *NT Interpretation*, 145–46.

[16] For example, counting fractions of years as whole years, one might declare that he or she attended college for *four* years because classes were taken in the years 2010, 2011, 2012, and 2013. However, this may actually be only *three* school-term years: (1) fall 2010–spring 2011, (2) fall 2011–spring 2012, (3) fall 2012–spring 2013.

[17] Jewett has "over 2000," *Chronology* 59–62, but with ORBIS we calculated over 2,880 miles with almost three months of actual travel time (no stops), limiting travel to ten (not fifteen) key locations in Paul's "second missionary journey" (cheapest and shortest routes in the summer and autumn travel seasons), see *ORBIS: Stanford Geospatial Network Model of the Roman World*, http://orbis.stanford.edu/#seatransport. On Paul's rate of travel, see Riesner, *Paul's Early Period*, 307–17, and Rapske, "Acts, Travel," *Book of Acts*, BAFC 2, 6–14.

and Paul's departure from Corinth limit the time span of the second journey to two or three years.[18] But the distance and time for the second journey (with stops and stays) was probably three to four years.[19] This is why we have included both the first and second journeys of Paul into the fourteen-year time frame and transposed the conference of Acts 15 to a later period.

Second Jerusalem Visit, 51 CE

It may be necessary at this point to further explain (1) why the two Jerusalem trips of Acts 11:27-30 and Acts 15 have been transposed to a later date (51 CE) and (2) why both missionary journeys depicted in Acts 13:14 and 15:30–18:22 are included within the fourteen years of Galatians 1:21 and 2:1 (37–51 CE). By linking the Galatians 2 conference (cf. Acts 15) with Paul's trip "up to" Jerusalem (Acts 18:22), we escape the necessity of positing seventeen empty years at the beginning of Paul's ministry and crowding virtually all that is known about his activity into the last few years.[20]

The Jerusalem offering (1 Cor 16:1-8; Rom 15:25-27), designed to bridge the gap between the Palestinian and Hellenistic churches, provided the motivation for the final trip to Jerusalem, although Luke omitted reference to it except for one detail (Acts 25:17). In order to account for the general knowledge in the early church that Paul had indeed brought an offering to Jerusalem, Luke placed the trip back in the early life of Paul in connection with a famine (Acts 11:27-30). Paul is careful to mention only an "acquaintance" trip and a "conference" journey, and this may be sufficient to overrule Luke's chronology at this point.[21]

[18] Most scholars date the Jerusalem conference of Acts 15 between 48 and 50 CE and Paul's departure from Corinth (Gallio inscription) between 51 and 52 CE. See Riesner, *Paul's Early Period*, 208–11; David J. Downs, "Chronology of NT," *NIDB* 1 (2006): 634–35. This time frame usually puts a limit of two to three years on Paul's second missionary journey (15:36–18:22).

[19] Jewett, *Chronology*, 59–62.

[20] Jewett, *Chronology*, 79; Knox, *Chapters*, 68, 71. Although he dates the Jerusalem/apostolic conference earlier (47, but possibly 50), Lüdemann finds indications that a Pauline mission (Gal 2:7-8) and even Paul's conflict at Antioch (2:11-14) occurred before the conference, *Paul* 64–75. Riesner favors 48/49, *Paul's Early Period*, 280–81.

[21] Downs, "Chronology of NT," *NIDB* 1, 634–35.

The following is a chart of the Jerusalem trips in both Paul's letters and Acts, reflecting our interpretation:

Jerusalem Visits	*Paul*	*Acts*
First trip, 37 CE (acquaintance visit)	Gal 1:18-20	Acts 9:26-27
Second trip, 51 CE (apostolic conference)	Gal 2:1-10	Acts 15
Final trip, 57 CE (collection and arrest)	Rom 15:25-27	Acts 21:17-36 Acts 11:27-30

The dating of the Jerusalem conference will be determined by the relationships of the following texts: Galatians 2:1-10, Acts 11:27-30, and Acts 15:1-35. Is Galatians 2 Paul's version of either the Jerusalem conference in Acts 15 or the famine relief visit of Acts 11:27-30? Note the chart of similarities and differences:

	Galatians 2	*Acts 11*	*Acts 15*
(1) Paul and associates present	Paul, Barnabas and Titus (v. 1)	Barnabas and Paul (v. 30)	Barnabas, Paul, and others (v. 2)
(2) nature of appointment	by revelation (v. 2)	sent by church (v. 30)	appointed by church (v. 2)
(3) occasion	circumcision of Gentiles by false brethren (vv. 3-4)	famine relief (vv. 28-29)	circumcision of Gentiles by men from Judea (v. 1)
(4) Jerusalem officials present	James, Cephas, John (v. 9)	_____	Peter, James, apostles and elders (v. 4)
(5) type of meeting	private (v. 2)	_____	public assembly (vv. 4, 12-14)
(6) mention of poor	remember the poor (v. 10)	relief for famine victims (v. 29)	_____

The similarities between Galatians 2 and Acts 15 are the most significant (nos. 1, 3, and 4). The differences (nos. 2, 5, and 6) between Galatians 2 and Acts 15 might be explained as two different versions or interpretations of the same event (nos. 2 and 6). Paul's omission of

the apostolic decrees (Acts 15:19-20; 21:25) may have been due to his own difficulties with such "legalistic" stipulations (Gal 2:6) or the possibility that they were introduced after the conference when Paul made his final trip to Jerusalem (Acts 21:25). If Acts is dependent on information about Paul from Paul's letters (or another source), perhaps the insertion of *apostolic* decrees was Luke's creative way of addressing the tension described in Galatians 2:11-13 (see footnote 5 on Pervo).

It seems unlikely that Galatians 2:10 ("remember the poor") is an allusion to the famine relief visit (Acts 11:27-30). We regard the relief visit as a displaced reference to the collection that Paul brought on his final visit to Jerusalem (Acts 21:17-26; 24:17; Rom 15:25-27).[22] In his letters, Paul's only concern for a famine relief is the collection for "the poor among the saints at Jerusalem" (Rom 15:26; 1 Cor 16:1-4; 2 Cor 9:11-14). The reference to "remember the poor" in Galatians 2:10 may even be an indication that the collection for the Jerusalem saints had already begun.[23]

We link the Galatians 2 and Acts 15 conference with Paul's trip "up to" Jerusalem after his second missionary journey (Acts 18:22; 51 CE) for the following reasons. First, it best conforms to the fourteen-year gap between the two Jerusalem visits (Gal 1:18; 2:1). Second, it allows enough time for Paul to undertake his extensive missionary travels described in Acts 13–14 and 15:35–18:22. Third, it takes seriously the priority of Paul's letters over Acts for a Pauline chronology. Because of these reasons, we date the Jerusalem conference at 51 CE (Gal 2 = Acts 15 = Acts 18:22) instead of between 48 and 50, as many scholars have argued.

[22] Knox, *Chapters*, 36–40; Jewett, *Chronology*, 79. Lüdemann views Acts 11:27-30 along with Acts 15:1-29 and 18:22 as a "Tripling of Paul's Second Visit to Jerusalem," *Paul*, 149–57. Nevertheless, in all of the above cases, Acts 11:27-30 is viewed as a Lukan insertion that seems chronologically out of place in the narrative. See appendix on chronologies of Paul in Daniel Patte, *Paul's Faith and the Power of the Gospel* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 352–61.

[23] Keith Nickle, *Collection* (London: Allenson, 1966), 59–62; Lüdemann, *Paul*, 77–81; Joubert, "Collection," *NIDB* 1, 698–99. Pervo concludes that Luke, knowing that the collection failed disastrously, has Paul refer to it as "alms for my nation" (Acts 24:17), *Dating Acts*, 134. For a narrative that takes Acts seriously while also viewing Paul's collection as less than a success, see Walter Wangerin, Jr., *Paul: A Novel* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000), 447–73.

Further Missionary Activity, 52–57 CE

This period includes Paul's twenty-seven-month stay in Ephesus (Acts 19:8-10; Phil 1; 4; Phlm; 2 Cor 1:8) with brief visits to Corinth (2 Cor 2:1; 12:14; 13:1), Troas (2 Cor 2:12), Macedonia (2:13; Acts 20:1), Illyricum (Rom 15:19), and Achaia (Rom 15:25; 16:1; Acts 20:2-3), before his final trip to Jerusalem (Acts 20:16; Rom 15:25). During these years, Paul's "collection for the saints" was begun (spring of 55; 1 Cor 16:1-8),[24] continued among the churches of Macedonia and Achaia (2 Cor 8–9), and was completed for delivery to Jerusalem (57 CE, Rom 15:25-27). All of Paul's undisputed letters were also written during this period, with the exception of 1 Thessalonians (50 CE from Corinth).

Final Jerusalem Visit, 57 CE

This last journey to Jerusalem is anticipated in Romans 15:25-27 and described in Acts 20:16; 21:1-18. According to Acts, the following events take place in Jerusalem and in Caesarea, after Paul is transferred there:

1. Conference with church and participation in a Jewish ritual at the temple (21:17-26)
2. Seized by a mob in the temple and taken into Roman custody (21:27-36)
3. Address to multitude and hearing before Sanhedrin (21:39–23:10)
4. Conspiracy discovered and Paul is transferred to Caesarea (23:11-31)
5. Stays in Caesarea for two years (24:27) where he appears on trial before the procurators Felix and Festus (24–25) and also the Herodian King Agrippa II (26)
6. Appeals to Caesar (25:10-12) and is sent to Rome (27:1–28:16)

Some verification for Paul's arrival in Jerusalem at 57 CE can be attained by dating the procuratorships of Felix and Festus (Acts 24–25). If one favors the reports of Josephus over that of Tacitus (as most scholars do), the arrival of Felix as procurator of Judea can be established

[24] Bruce W. Longenecker has Paul's collection, beginning in spring of 54 or 55 ("Pentecost," 1 Cor 16:8), favoring the earlier date, in his *Remember the Poor* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010), 341.

around 52–53 CE.[25] If one follows the progression of Roman procurators in the years prior to the Jewish war (66–70 CE), a date of 59 or 60 can be maintained for the arrival of Festus as the successor of Felix.[26]

Acts 24:27 states that when two years had elapsed (since Paul's transfer to Caesarea as a prisoner), the Roman procurator was succeeded by Porcius Festus. Based on our dating of these procuratorships, Paul's arrival in Caesarea would have been around 57 CE. According to Acts, Paul's transfer from Jerusalem to Caesarea took place about two weeks after his arrival in Jerusalem around Pentecost, in the summer of 57 (Acts 20:16; 21:17, 26-27; 22:30; 23:11-12, 31-33).

As a result of our discussion we can outline the chronology of this phase as follows:

1. Arrival in Jerusalem (Acts 21:17), summer of 57
2. Hearing before Felix in Caesarea (24:10-22), summer of 57
3. Hearing before Festus and Agrippa (25–26) after two years (24:27), summer of 59
4. Departure from Caesarea for Rome (27:1-8), late summer or early fall of 59

Journey to Rome, 59–60 CE

After his appeal to Caesar had been granted (Acts 25:10-12; 26:32), Paul and other prisoners set sail for Italy under Roman custody (27:1). The sea voyage was probably undertaken before the dangerous season for sailing began (i.e., before mid-September). Paul and the others boarded a sailing vessel to Myra of Lycia (southern Asia Minor) where they transferred to a larger grain ship en route to Italy (27:7-8). As the

[25] Emperor Claudius appointed Felix as Cumanus's successor around the twelfth year of his reign (ca. 53 CE), Josephus, *Ant.* 20.134–140; *War* 2.245–249. In Tacitus, *Annals* 12.54, Felix and Cumanus were procurators at the same time over a divided Palestine; see Riesner, *Paul's Early Period*, 219–21.

[26] Because there are dating problems connected with Josephus's own report on the circumstances immediately following the dismissal of Felix (*Ant.* 20.182–185), we prefer to work back from Josephus's reports on the procurators of Judea from the Jewish War (66–70 CE) to the years of rule shared by Felix and his successor Festus (ca. 52–62). Festus served for a brief period until his death in 61 or 62 CE (*Ant.* 20.197–203); Hemer, *Book of Acts*, 171; Jewett, *Chronology*, 43.

summer months came to an end, sailing became difficult on the eastern Mediterranean.[27]

Paul and company stayed at Fair Havens after the Day of Atonement "fast" (Acts 27:9). According to the solar calendar, in 59 CE, the Day of Atonement (Tishri 10) took place on October 5th.[28]

Fig. 8: Arch of Titus, Roman Forum, Commemorating the Defeat of Judean Rebels in Jerusalem, 70 CE. Image by Charles Puskas.

[27] James Smith, *St. Paul's Voyage and Shipwreck* (London: Spottiswoode and Co., 1880), 74–81; C. J. Hemer, "Euraquilo and Melita," *JTS* 26 (1975): 100–111; Rapske, "Acts, Travel," BAFC 2, 22–29.

[28] Bruce, *Book of Acts*, 481; Witherington, *Acts*, 762; David G. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles* PNTC (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009), 684–85; Pervo, however, regards this precise dating as too speculative, in Pervo, *Acts*, 656–57.

Since the dangerous sailing season had begun, the pilot and ship owner attempted to winter at a seaport in Crete (27:9-12). The ship, however, was caught in a gale and driven westward (27:13-20). Following the chronological notations of Acts (27:20, 27, 33, 39), the boat shipwrecked at Malta in early November of 59 CE (27:39–28:1). After staying in Malta for three months and three days (28:7, 11), they sailed for Rome in early February of 60 CE and arrived there within two weeks (28:11-16).

According to Acts 28:30, Paul stayed in Rome for "two whole years." He awaited his appeal to Caesar with some degree of freedom. The apostle was also under house arrest and able to receive visitors (28:16-17, 23, 31).[29]

Execution, 62 CE

The evidence concerning the end of Paul's life is related to the question of the authorship of the Pastoral Letters. References to the "first defense" in 2 Timothy 4:16 and his "rescue" in 4:17 have led some scholars to conclude that Paul was released after the two-year imprisonment in Acts 28:30. If one follows the position taken in the first edition of this volume that Paul probably did not write the Pastoral Letters, this evidence should be excluded.[30] The references to Paul's journey to Spain in the Muratorian Fragment and 1 Clement 5 are probably derived from Romans 15:24, although the allusion in 1 Clement 5.7 does not require undertaking a mission to Spain interpretation.[31]

[29] If the variant reading of Acts 28:16 in the Western text (fifth century) is correct (Paul and the prisoners were handed over to the "stratopedarch") and it refers to the emperor's pretorian guard, the last single office holder was Afranius Burrus, who died in 62 CE. This variant would establish a latest possible date for Paul's arrival in Rome (Jewett, *Chronology*, 44). For discussion of Acts 28:16, see Puskas, *Conclusion of Luke-Acts*, 19, nn. 43–44; Rapske, *Roman Custody*, BAFC 3,174–77.

[30] On authorship and date of the Pastorals, see Kümmel, *Introduction*, 370–84; Lewis R. Donelson, *Pseudepigraphy and Ethical Argument in the Pastoral Epistles*, HUT 22 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1986); Raymond F. Collins, *Letters That Paul Did Not Write: The Epistle to the Hebrews and the Pauline Pseudepigrapha*, GNS 28 (Wilmington: Glazier, 1988).

[31] 1 Clem 5.7 states that Paul "reached the limits of the west" before his death. This phrase could refer to Illyricum, Rome, or Spain ("farthest limits").

A Chronology of Paul's Life[32]

Conversion/Call	34 CE (see Gal 1:15-16; 1 Cor 15:8; Acts 9:1-9)
First Jerusalem visit	37 CE (Gal 1:18-19; Acts 9:26-28)
Missionary activity	37–51 CE (Gal 1:21; Acts 13–14; 16:1–18:22)
Second Jerusalem visit	51 CE (Gal 2:1-20; Acts 15) apostolic conference, Jerusalem
Further missionary work	(Acts 19–20; 1 Cor 16:1-8; e.g., collection for the saints 2 Cor 8–9; Rom 15:25-27)
Final visit to Jerusalem	57 CE (Acts 21:17-18, 27-33) arrest and imprisonment
Arrival in Rome	60 CE (Acts 28:16, 30-31)
Execution of Paul	62 CE (1 Clem 5; Eusebius, *Eccl Hist* 2.22)

Some decisive data for the death of Paul is in Acts 28:30-31 and 20:24, 38. The author of Acts appears to bring his work to a positive conclusion (28:30-31) but seems aware of Paul's death (20:24, 38). In all likelihood the execution of Paul took place soon after his two-year stay in Rome, under Nero.[33]

The reign of Nero in 62 CE was marked by growing suspicion and the restoration of treason trials. Early in 62 CE, the efficient administrator Afranius Burrus had died (Tacitus, *Annals* 14.51) and the wise advisor Seneca was dismissed. In the summer of 62 CE, Claudia Octavia, Nero's former wife, was executed. Because the reputation of

---

The death of Peter is also mentioned as contemporary with that of Paul (5.2–5), which cannot be verified.

[32] Chart derived from Robert Jewett, *A Chronology of Paul's Life*, 98–103.

[33] Although influenced by the Pastorals in asserting that Paul was released and retried, Eusebius, early fourth century, does state that Paul "suffered martyrdom under Nero" in Rome (Eusebius, *Eccl Hist* 2.22). The fragment of Paul's martyrdom in the novelistic *Acts of Paul* (late second century) has Paul beheaded in Rome under Nero because the apostle revived Patroclus from the dead (cf. Acts 20:9-12). Patroclus, Nero's cupbearer, follows Christ because of Paul's witness, angers the emperor, and is imprisoned. But hours after his death, the resurrected Paul confronts Nero, who then releases Patroclus and his companions from prison (Schneemelcher, *NT Apocrypha*, 2:260–63). See also sources and discussion in Meeks and Fitzgerald, *St. Paul* (2007), 224–27.

Nero's government changed in early 62 from one of judicial fairness to treachery and suspicion, it is unnecessary to link Paul's death with the later persecution of Christians in connection with the great fire of Rome (64 CE).[34]

For approximately twenty-eight years, Paul followed Jesus. Although we cannot be certain of the dates, any attempt at chronological specification for Paul's apostleship is worth the trouble since it helps us realize that the New Testament's most famous letter writer lived in what some would call the real world of economic, political, and social contingencies. Though his letters' canonical status allows them in some ways to transcend time, we can only fully understand them by first situating them within the twenty-eight years outlined in this chapter.

[34] On Nero, the fire in Rome, and the local persecution of Christians, see Tacitus, *Annals* 15.44 (early second century, Roman historian) and Sulpicius Severus, *Chronicle* 2.29 (early fifth century, Christian source); Barrett, *NT Background*, 15–17.

CHAPTER 4

The Letter to the Romans

Introduction

One of Paul's most influential works is his letter to the Romans, which summarizes and develops much of the teaching mentioned in his earlier writings. Romans is known for the themes of justification by faith, the promise to Abraham and the ongoing place of Israel in God's plan, the law, sonship, life in the Spirit, and union with Christ that are also found in his letter to the Galatians. Furthermore, the apostle's discussions on Christ, the second Adam, spiritual gifts and ministries, and the relations between the strong and the weak that occur in 1 Corinthians reappear here in Romans.

The subsequent influence of Romans can be seen in both the New Testament (NT) and the history of Christianity. In the NT, we find common themes that may indicate some acquaintance with Romans. First Peter includes the following topics mentioned earlier in Paul's letter: Jesus as the stone that causes some to stumble (Isa 28:16), spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God, obedience to the state, and the exercise of gifts and duties in the church. The letter to the Hebrews, probably following the lead of Romans, portrays Abraham as a model of faith and has a quotation from Deuteronomy 32, just as we see in Romans.[1] The letter of James responds to Romans and reworks the following motifs from Romans: human judgment of others, the significance of acting rather than merely knowing or hearing, the nature of Abraham's

[1] Abraham as a model of faith is found in Rom 4:1-25 and Heb 11:8-19. Deut 32:35 is quoted in Rom 12:19 and Heb 10:30; Deut 32:43 is quoted in Rom 15:10 and Heb 1:6. For a thorough exploration of the relationship between Hebrews and Romans, see Clare K. Rothschild, *Hebrews As Pseudepigraphon: The History and Significance of the Pauline Attribution of Hebrews*, WUNT 235 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009).

justification, suffering as the forge of character and faith.[2] The book of Acts is also clearly aware of Romans, modeling its descriptions of Paul's ministry on the Jew first, then the Greek theme as found in Romans, and concluding with Paul preaching the kingdom of God unhindered in Rome.[3] It has even been proposed that the person targeted by Matthew 5:19a—the one who abolishes one of the least of the Mosaic Law's commandments and teaches others to do so—is Paul, the author of such texts as Romans 3:21-22 and 9:30-32 that indicate that God's righteousness does not come from the works of Mosaic Law.[4] There are more parallels and responses to Paul's letters—including Romans—than meets the eye at first reading.[5]

In early church history, Romans had a definite influence on Western Christendom. Clement of Rome (95 CE) and Ignatius of Antioch (117 CE) cited this letter frequently. The heretic Marcion included it in his own list of apostolic writings (140 CE). The influential doctrines of inherited sin, divine grace, and righteousness in the teaching of Augustine (389–427 CE) were mostly derived from Paul's letter to the Romans. The commentaries on Romans by Martin Luther (*Lectures on Romans*, 1515–16), Philip Melanchthon (1529), and John Calvin (1539) became major treatises of the Protestant Reformation. John Wesley, founder of the Methodist Church, was profoundly moved as he

[2] Human judgment of others (Rom 2:1-16; 14:10-12; Jas 4:11-12); acting rather than only knowing or hearing (Rom 2:17-24; Jas 2:8-13); Abraham's justification (Rom 4:1-12; Jas 2:14-26); suffering as forge of character and faith (Rom 5:1-5; 8:18-27; Jas 1:2-4).

[3] Narratives such as Acts 13:44-49; 18:1-8; 19:8-10; 28:17-28 follow the "Jew first, then Greek" principle found in Rom 1:16; 2:10. For Paul's proclamation of the kingdom of God and things of Christ, see Rom 1:16-17; Acts 28:30-31.

[4] Johannes Weiss, *Earliest Christianity* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1959), 753; Bultmann, *Theology*, 54; H. D. Betz, *Essays on the Sermon on the Mount* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 51; cf. Ulrich Luz, "Die Erfüllung des Gesetzes bei Matthäus," 411. The Latin *Paulus* means "small." Betz also mentions LXX 1 Kgs 9:21 (= 1 Sam 9:21) for the Saul-"least" equation in Greek (51, n. 54).

[5] Further discussion of these parallels is found in our treatments of James, 1 Peter, and Hebrews. See also W. Sanday and A. C. Headlam, *The Epistle to the Romans*, ICC (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1905), liv–lxii, lxxiv–lxxxv; and Rothschild's chapter, "Literary Dependence: The Imitation of Paul in Hebrews," in *Hebrews As Pseudepigraphon*.

listened to a reading of the preface to Luther's commentary on Romans, in which Luther describes his discovery of "passive righteousness." In the twentieth century, the second of three commentaries on Romans by the Swiss pastor Karl Barth (1922) was especially responsible for the death knell of nineteenth-century liberalism and the emergence of "neo-orthodoxy," which reasserted the doctrines of God's transcendent righteousness and human sinfulness.

In attempts to discover its occasion and purpose, modern scholars have identified Romans as a manifesto of Paul's deepest convictions, his position paper on vital Christian issues, his last will and testament, and his letter of self-introduction. Before giving our own perspective on the book, we will examine its occasion and purpose, genre, and structure.

The Occasion

The letter was probably written in Corinth or Cenchrea, the port city of Corinth, shortly before Paul's trip to Jerusalem with a collection for the poor (Rom 15:25, 31; 16:1-2; cf. 1 Cor 16:1-3). This period may correspond with his three-month stay in Achaia according to Acts 20:2-3. The date is months before Pentecost (June) of 57 CE, Paul's arrival in Jerusalem. It is probably the winter of late 56 or early 57, since he left Achaia for Philippi by the Passover (April) of that year, according to Acts 20:6.[6]

The Churches at Rome

The issuing of a call for acceptance and the challenge to praise God together presuppose a situation of different churches in Rome (Rom 14:1; 15:6-7). This observation is made explicit in Paul's final greetings, where at least five churches are mentioned (Rom 16:5, 10-11, 14-15).[7]

[6] For further discussion see Jewett, *Chronology*, 49–50,100–103 and his *Romans* (2007), 18-23; G. Lüdemann, *Paul, Apostle to the Gentiles: Studies in Chronology*, trans. F. S. Jones (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 98–99; W. M. Ramsay, *St. Paul the Traveller and Roman Citizen* (1897; repr., Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1962), 286–89; Rainer Riesner, *Paul's Early Period: Chronology, Mission Strategy, Theology*, trans. Douglas W. Stott (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998).

[7] On the churches in Rome Peter Lampe writes, "in the capital city of Rome, we count five different Christian islands. If we assume that the other fourteen people of Romans 16 do not belong to any of these five crystallization points

The origin and development of the Roman churches are obscure. We know that their existence was well known to Paul (Rom 1:8), although at the writing of the letter he had not been to the city of Rome. On a number of occasions (1:13), and for a number of years (15:23), he had sought to visit them; now on his intended way to Spain, he wants to be sure to realize his hopes for a visit (Rom 1:13; 15:22-25, 28).

A vague allusion in Suetonius's *Lives of Twelve Caesars* (*Claudius* 25) states that "since the Jews constantly made disturbances at the instigation of Chrestos, he (Claudius) expelled them from Rome." If "the instigation of Chrestos" refers to preaching about Christ, and not some Jewish agitator named "Chrestos," it may indicate that there was a Roman church before 49 CE when the expulsion took place. Support for this Christian interpretation is found in Acts 18:2, where Aquila and Priscilla left Italy for Corinth "because Claudius had ordered all Jews to leave Rome." After the death of Claudius (54 CE), the ban was probably lifted, and Jews, like Aquila and Priscilla, were able to return home (Rom 16:3).[8]

Fig. 9: Denar des Nero (Emperor, 54–68 CE).

Plausible support for Roman churches of both Jews and Gentiles can be gleaned from Paul's letter. If Romans 16 was addressed to

---

and that they hardly could all have belonged to only one other additional circle, then this results in at least seven separate islands of Christianity." *From Paul to Valentinus: Christians at Rome in the First Two Centuries*, trans. Michael Steinhauser (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), 359.

[8] See Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 11–16; N. T. Wright sees this return to Rome of Jewish Christ-believers as causing tension with the Gentile believers already there, "Romans and the Theology of Paul," in *Pauline Theology*, vol. 3, *Romans*, eds., David M. Hay and E. Elizabeth Johnson (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 35.

Rome, which we—along with most people currently studying Romans—maintain, we meet people there with distinctly Jewish names (e.g., Aquila, Andronicus, and Junia, "relatives" or "compatriots," and Herodian).[9] Also, several of Paul's arguments seem to presuppose a Jewish-Christian audience (e.g., 4:1; 15:7-8). In addition to Jewish believers, Paul explicitly addresses Gentile Christians in 11:13-32 and 15:10-11. Our goal in a discussion of this sort is to bring the implied audience of the letter into as sharp a focus as possible. The historical audience is lost to us and we have no solid basis on which to argue, except for the significant number of Jews that the archaeological and epigraphical evidence indicates for the late Republic and early Empire in Rome. Our challenge of identifying the implied audience, however, is complicated by Paul's use of the diatribe, in which he addresses imaginary characters, the first two of which in the following list are clearly Jews—Romans 2:1, 17; 3:1, 3; 9:19.

At least two Romans scholars, A. Andrew Das and Neil Elliott, have argued that the implied audience of this letter is exclusively Gentile.[10] Why do students of Romans debate the question of the letter's audience, asking whether it is both Jewish and Gentile or exclusively Gentile? Our understanding of the audience directly affects our understanding of Paul's views on righteousness. If the "apart from the law" language in Romans 3:21 is addressed to an audience that is only Gentile, then it allows room for interpreters today to say that Paul respected the function of Mosaic Law for Jews. But if Paul is addressing both Jews and Gentiles in his letter, then a more radical portrait of Paul the apostle to the Gentiles, who completely removed the Mosaic Law from God's economy of salvation, is more probable for some readers.

As we read the letter, it is clear in certain places that Paul expects that Jews will be reading the letter. Thus, Paul's repeated insistence that his gospel does not encourage people to sin makes best sense against the backdrop of accusations by Jewish leaders that Paul's gospel encourages immorality (3:5-8; 6:1-2). Paul's defense of the value of Mosaic Law is also clearly addressed to Jewish concerns (3:31; 7:12, 14). Paul's interrupted list of Jewish benefits includes the very items

[9] Lampe counts fourteen people in Romans 16 with names that "suggest an eastern origin." Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 170.

[10] Neil Elliott, *The Rhetoric of Romans: Argumentative Constraint and Strategy and Paul's Dialogue with Judaism* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990); A. Andrew Das, *Solving the Romans Debate* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006).

that he as apostle to the Gentiles was accused of trivializing (3:1-2; 9:4-5). Paul's clear statements of grief for his people's predicament and prayer for them and their salvation are most readily explained by considering that some Jews would be reading this letter (9:1-3; 10:1; 11:25-26). And his statement explicitly addressed to Gentiles that Jews are beloved for the sake of the fathers, makes best sense if written in a context in which Jews would also hear the letter (11:28). It seems best to stay with the traditional understanding of an implied audience of both Gentiles and Jews.[11]

The Purpose of the Letter

Based on our discussion of the background situation, it appears that Paul sought the support of the Roman Christians for his immediate mission to Jerusalem and a future mission to Spain. Concerning his trip to Jerusalem, Paul desperately begs for the prayer support of the Roman Christians, since he expects opposition in the Jewish city (15:30-31). Regarding his anticipated trip to Spain, Paul hoped that Rome would serve as a base of operation for a western mission (15:22-25, 28). He, therefore, anticipates the hospitality of the Roman Christians when he eventually visits them (15:22-25, 28-29, 32; also 16:1-2, 23). It is with this background data that we can understand Paul's interest in writing to Rome, his constant mention of the Roman Christians in his prayers (1:9), and his desire to visit them soon (1:10-11, 13). Even the respect for his audience and care not to suggest that they needed a letter from him, so uncharacteristic in his letters, indicate how strongly he needed the support of the churches in Rome (Rom 1:11-12; 15:14-16).

[11] For the idea that Paul arbitrates between Jewish and Gentile believers in Jesus, see Origen's *Commentary on Romans* 3.2.2 (on Rom 3:9-18; *Origen: Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans Books 1–5*, vol. 1, trans. Thomas P. Scheck, FOTC 103 [Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2001], 188); 10.8.2 (on Rom 15:8-12; *Origen: Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans Books 6–10*, vol. 2, trans. Thomas P. Scheck, FOTC 104 [Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2002], 272). For a double audience of Jew and Gentile in the letter, see also Joseph Fitzmyer, SJ, *Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB33 (New York: Doubleday, 1993), 30–31; Robert Jewett, *Romans: A Commentary*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 70–72; Arland Hultgren, *Paul's Letter to the Romans: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011), 9–11.

Besides securing support for his intended trip to Spain, it is also clear that Paul's letter attempts to portray his proclamation of Christ as a rival gospel to the Roman Empire's gospels. Imperial propaganda used the plural "gospels" when proclaiming news of Rome's conquests of new territories, or in the political rhetoric preferred by Rome, of bringing peace to other peoples. The propagandist Calpurnius Siculus, writing for Nero in the 50s, celebrates the idea that the peace of Nero's reign is so assured and beneficent that Nero is able to sheathe his sword and no longer needs to use it.[12] Nero's advisor Seneca also praises Nero for his nonviolent rule: "You are distinguished, Caesar, by a state free of bloodshed, and this, by your great pride in which you glory that no drop of human blood has been shed, for this is very significant and miraculous, since no one ever was granted the sword at a younger age."[13] By contrast, Paul, who had suffered in Roman prisons for preaching that one executed by the Romans was indeed the son of God, lists the sword as a threat to Roman believers and warns them that Rome's sword is not sheathed (Romans 8:35; 13:4). The reference to the "God of peace" in Romans 16:20 is certainly a critique of *pax Romana* propaganda, though it is not as obvious in Romans as it is in 1 Thessalonians 5:3, 23.

Besides *pax*, Neil Elliott has shown how this letter subverts other virtues that the Roman state religion had deified and worshiped: *iustitia* (righteousness or justice), *clementia* (mercy), *pietas* (piety), and *virtus* (power). Paul seeks to dissociate from these symbols of arrogance and abuse (e.g., of the emperor Caligula's decree that his own statue be erected in the temple of Jerusalem) by asserting an alternative reality (divine sonship of Jesus, God's mercy, Abraham's faith) often in apocalyptic terms.[14]

[12] Calpurnius Siculus, *Eclogue* 1.42–68 in *Minor Latin Poets*, trans. by J. Wight Duff and Arnold M. Duff, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press / London: William Heinemann, 1961).

[13] Seneca, *On Mercy* 1.11.3 (trans. Reasoner). In this context, the classicist Sarah Ruden interprets Paul in Romans 13 as organizing his communities along military lines, e.g., "be deployed under," *Paul among the People*, 119–46, esp. 127–29.

[14] Neil Elliott, *The Arrogance of Nations: Reading Romans in the Shadow of Empire*, Paul in Critical Contexts (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008), 59–161.

Even though there has been much debate on the intended purpose of Romans, our study has led us to some specific conclusions.[15] The following themes, therefore, surface as major reasons for writing the letter: to promote solidarity, to secure support, to solidify his theological positions, and to encourage hospitality. These points will be explained in our discussion of the book's rhetorical structure.

The Integrity of Chapter 16

Because of its unusual contents (e.g., greetings to twenty-six people) and the displacement of the closing doxology in certain Greek manuscripts (i.e., 16:25–27, after chapters 14 [mss. A, P, L] or after 15 [p46]), it has been argued that Romans 16 was not originally part of the letter. Some have even argued that it was a letter fragment addressed to the Ephesians.[16] However, for the following reasons, Romans 1–16 is best viewed as a complete work. First, the textual evidence is too diverse to support the Romans 1–15 position, since, for example, Marcion's text and other manuscripts (A, L) end at chapter 14! Second, the familiar names of chapter 16 have ties with Rome and even the unknown names were common there, being found in inscriptions from Rome. Third, it can be shown that the numerous greetings of chapter 16 serve as effective appeals for what Paul is trying to accomplish in the letter.[17]

[15] The difficulty of aligning the content of Romans with its purpose is underscored in: W. S. Campbell, "Why Did Paul Write Romans?" *ExpT* 85 (1974): 264–69; O. Bornkamm, "The Letter to Romans as Paul's Last Will and Testament," 17–31, and G. Klein, "Paul's Purpose in Writing the Epistle to the Romans," in Donfried, *Romans Debate*, 29–43, and *idem*, "Romans, Letter to" in *IDBSup* 753–54; A. J. M. Wedderburn, *The Reasons for Romans* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991).

[16] See the textual problems outlined in Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart: German Bible Society, 1994), 475–77. For Romans 16 as a letter fragment addressed to Ephesus, see T. W. Manson, "St. Paul's Letter to the Romans and Others," *BJRL* 31 (1948): 224–40, reprinted in Donfried, *Romans Debate*, 3–15.

H. MacDonald, "Was Romans xvi a Separate Letter?" *NTS* 16 (1969–70): 369–72; N. R. Peterson, "On the Ending(s) to Paul's Letter to Rome," in *The Future of Early Christianity*, B. Pearson, ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 337–47.

[17] For arguments supporting Romans 1–16 as a complete letter, see K. Donfried, "A Short Note on Romans 16," *JBL* 89 (1970): 441–49; H. Gamble,

The Genre of Romans

Because Paul is unable to be present in Rome, he communicates with the Christians there by means of a letter. Romans contains all of the features of an early Christian letter: opening, 1:1-7; thanksgiving, 1:8-17; body, 1:18–11:36; parenesis (practical instruction), 12:1–15:13; a travelogue, 15:14-32; and a lengthy closing 15:33–16:27.

What type of letter is Romans? It is much longer than the typical letters of antiquity, clearly seeks to offer instructions, and reads like a public or official document. Because of these features, it has been suggested that Romans is a letter essay comparable to the letters of the philosopher Epicurus (Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 10), the political advisor Seneca (*Epistle* 88), and the biographer Plutarch (*Moralia* 1012B–1030C). All of these letters have an instructive (didactic) function, a public character (written to a specific person but clearly meant to be read by the public), and are written by authoritative figures.

Identifying Romans as a letter essay, however, does not fully explain Paul's specific appeals and objectives in writing it. Therefore, it is also necessary to discern and outline the rhetorical structure, as we will do in Paul's other letters.

The Rhetorical Structure

Because of Paul's concern for Christian solidarity and his didactic emphasis in Romans, the letter corresponds impressively with epideictic or demonstrative rhetoric.[18] In comparison with the judicial persua-

---

The Textual History of the Letter to the Romans (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1977), 36–55; Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 153–64; Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul*, 324–28; W.-H. Ollrog, "Die Abfassungsverhältnisse von Röm 16," in *Kirche* (Günther Bornkamm Festschrift), ed. D. Lührmann and G. Strecker (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1980), 221–24; Jewett, *Romans*, 941–42.

[18] Discussions and outline of Romans as epideictic or demonstrative rhetoric have been adapted, with some modification, from: Aristotle *Rhetoric* 1.3, 9; 3.12; W. Wuellner, "Paul's Rhetoric of Argumentation in Romans," in Donfried, *Romans Debate*, 128–46; Ch. Perelman and L. Olbrichts-Tyteca, *The New Rhetoric: A Treatise on Argumentation*, trans. by J. Wilkinson and P. Weaver (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1969), 47–55; and George Kennedy, *NT Rhetorical Criticism* (1984), 152–56. See also Kennedy's

sion of Galatians 1–2, Romans is not as defensive in tone, nor is it as pointedly concerned with wrongdoing in the implied audience as are Galatians and 1 Corinthians. And unlike the deliberative rhetoric in 1 Corinthians, Romans contains relatively little on the issues of expediency and practical necessity. Those who emphasize the conclusion of the letter's argument would consider this letter deliberative, saying that how a letter argument ends (i.e., *peroration*) indicates its predominant purpose.[19] But if one simply compares the sections allotted in the letter to epideictic and deliberative aims, the former is much more visible. What seems to be Paul's effort here is to affirm common beliefs and values with the intention of gaining support from his readers. Like many of our conversations today, there is probably more than one rhetorical goal in this letter. Thus, we conclude that the letter is predominantly epideictic in focus but that there are also some undeniable elements of deliberative discourse, in which Paul is trying to change the behavior of his audience (Rom 6:12-19; 13:1–15:6, 23-24, 30-31). Since Paul had not yet been to Rome to make disciples when he wrote his Letter to the Romans, some have argued that it therefore contains *protreptic* rhetoric (related to *paraenetic* and deliberative persuasion).[20]

Basic Features

Epideictic rhetoric is concerned with the display of common values and virtues held by both the addressor and addressees. "Epideictic" comes from the Greek word *epideixis*, meaning "a display" or "demonstration." This type of persuasion is characteristic of funeral orations, political speeches, and addresses at festivals or games. These modes of discourse seek to secure public sentiment by extolling the common virtues of the audiences addressed. Epideictic rhetoric has its roots in encomia, which

---

translation with introduction, notes, and appendices of *Aristotle on Rhetoric: A Theory of Civic Discourse* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

[19] Paul Minear, *The Obedience of Faith: The Purposes of Paul in the Epistle to the Romans*, SBT 19 (Naperville, IL: Alec R. Allenson, 1971).

[20] Similar to deliberative rhetoric and *paraenetic* (exhortative) language but perhaps more forceful or intentional, Stanley K. Stowers adds *protreptic* rhetoric, promoting a *particular course* of action (Gk. *protreptein*, "to urge, impel"), even calling the audience to a new way of life, Stowers, *Letter Writing in Greco-Roman Antiquity*, 91–92. See also David E. Aune, "Romans as *Logos Protreptikos*," in Donfried, *Romans Debate*, 278–96.

attempts to honor certain individuals because of their outstanding character or accomplishments.

Examples from the Greco-Roman World

Examples of epideictic oratory are: the speech of Pericles praising the virtues of Athens in Thucydides's *Peloponnesian War* (2.34–46; fifth century BCE); the funeral oration of Aspasia to the Athenians in Plato's *Menexenus* (236E–249C; fourth century BCE); and most of the speeches found in Isocrates' *Panegyrics* and his *Plataicus* (fourth century BCE) and in Lysias's *Olympicas* (late fourth century BCE). On the American scene, examples of epideictic rhetoric are: Lincoln's Gettysburg address, political campaign speeches, and most presidential addresses. All of these attempt to secure public sentiment and support by affirming common values (or denouncing common vices).

A Structural Outline of Romans

The structure of epideictic (also called "demonstrative") speeches is discussed in the rhetorical handbooks of Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian. Paul's letter to the Romans coincides with the arrangement recommended by the rhetoricians. This is a good place to remember that our standards for a logical outline of a letter-essay most probably do not correspond with what the standards were in Paul's day. Another long treatise dealing with *dikaiosunē* (righteousness or justice), written centuries before Paul's letter-essay to the Romans, Plato's *Republic* is famous for how it breaks and later resumes various lines in its argument (e.g., 392c3, 405b3). The outline that follows of Romans, and indeed all of the outlines in this book, are offered to help us get a handle on the thought flow of the letters, but it would be futile to argue that Paul had rhetorical outlines on his mind as he dictated his letters.[21]

[21] See, e.g., the competing opinions on both the macro- and microrhetorical analyses discussed in R. Dean Anderson, Jr., *Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Paul*, rev. ed. (Leuven: Peeters, 1999), 191–205, and Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul the Letter-Writer*, 65–83. See also Jeffrey A. D. Weima, "What Does Aristotle Have to Do with Paul? An Evaluation of Rhetorical Criticism," *CTJ* 32 (1997): 458–68.

The Rhetorical Structure of Romans

I.	Introduction (*exordium*)	1:1-15
	Letter opening	1:1, 7
	Thanksgiving	1:8-10
	Occasion and purpose (v. 12 common faith)	1:8-15
II.	Proposition (as *enthymeme*)	1:16-17
III.	Exposition of argument (*confirmatio*)	1:18–15:13
	A. Theological argument (*probatio*): God's righteousness in Christ	1:18–11:36
	1. Negative argument: the human plight without Christ[22] (common vices)	1:18–3:20
	2. Positive argument: revelation of God's righteousness (common values)	3:21–8:39
	a. Righteousness by faith in Christ[23]	3:21–4:25
	b. New life and union with Christ[24]	5:1–8:39
	3. Israel and God's righteousness in Christ: Israel's present unbelief and God's election, salvation in Christ, God's plan to save all Israel[25]	9:1–11:36

[22] The following work argues that Paul's context for Romans 1:18-32 is the idolatry and gender-variant practices of Graeco-Roman goddess cults, Jeramy Townsley, "Paul, the Goddess Religions, and Queer Sects: Romans 1:23-28," *JBL* 130, no. 4 (2011): 707–28. Paul (as a Jew and servant of Christ) regards idolatry as related to other immoral vices that he hopes (even expects) the Roman Christians to agree with him about forsaking and avoiding.

[23] Hultgren argues that "faith in Christ" here is an objective genitive based on the immediate context of what follows in Romans 4—Abraham believed in God's promises and so was justified (4:3, 11, 22), *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, 637. See survey of discussion in appendix 3 of his commentary.

See also David M. Hay, "Pistis as 'Ground for Faith' in Hellenized Judaism and Paul," *JBL* 108 (1989): 461–76; Morna D. Hooker, *From Adam to Christ: Essays on Paul* (Cambridge, 1990), 165–86.

[24] J.-N. Aletti provides a helpful rhetorical outline of Romans 5–8 as: introduction (5:1-11), preparation of argument with Adam/Christ *synkrisis* or *comparatio* (5:12-21), *propositio* (5:20-21), proofs with *synkrisis* in man under sin/the baptized and *sarx/preuma* (6:1–8:30), and conclusion (8:31-39) cited in Aune, *Literature and Rhetoric*, 430. Paul has rethought the place of the law within God's plan in light of the Christ event, Wright, *Climax of the Covenant*, 215–16.

[25] In Romans 11:17-29, Mark Nanos argues that the olive tree branches are "broken" or "bent" but *not* broken off (vv. 17-20) in his "'Broken Branches':

	B. Practical exhortations (*exhortatio*): Present bodies as living sacrifices	12:1–15:6
	1. In worship and church relations, love without pretense[26]	12:1-21
	2. Obey the state, love neighbor, put on the Lord Jesus	13:1-14
	3. Weak and strong: build up instead of judging or scorning[27]	14:1–15:6
IV.	Closing (*conclusio*)	15:7–16:23
	A. Recapitulation of thesis (*peroratio*): Welcome one another, since Christ came as servant for the Jews and so Gentiles would praise God	15:7-8
	B. Scripture portrays Jews and Gentiles praising God; May the God of Hope fill you with joy and peace in believing	15:9-13
	C. Travelogue: Paul's aims, calling, and plans[28]	15:14-29

A Pauline Metaphor Gone Awry? (Romans 11:11-36)," in *Between Gospel and Election: Explorations in the Interpretation of Romans 9–11*, ed. Florian Wilk and J. Ross Wagner (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 339–76; seeing the allegory continue in vv. 25–26a, Nanos argues that "a protective callus has formed on Israel" until the full number of the Gentiles comes in "then all Israel will be healed" in his "'Callused,' not 'Hardened': Paul's Revelation of Temporary Protection Until All Israel Can Be Healed," in *Reading Paul in Context: Explorations in Identity Formation*, ed. Kathy Ehrensperger and J. Brian Tucker (London and New York: T & T Clark, 2010). See also www.marknanos.com/Callused-CentralSBL-5-6-10.pdf. For different views on Romans 9–11, see *Reading Israel in Romans: Legitimacy and Plausibility of Divergent Interpretations*, ed. Cristina Grenholm and Daniel Patte (Harrisburg, PA: TPI, 2000), part 2.

[26] N. T. Wright observes, "for Paul the significance of baptism was that one had come into a new family and had to start behaving as though that was in fact true," *Paul in Fresh Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005), 165.

[27] Mark Reasoner, *The Strong and Weak: Rom 14:1–15:13 in Context*, SNTSMS 103 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

[28] On Paul's collection for "the poor saints in Jerusalem" (15:26ff.), N. T. Wright regards it as "a major element in Paul's practical strategy for creating and sustaining the one family of God redefined around the Messiah and in the Spirit," *Paul: A Fresh Perspective*, 167.

D. Personal appeals (pathos)	15:30–16:24
1. Struggle together in your prayers for me; May the God of Peace be with you all	15:30-33
2. I commend Phoebe to you; Greet all—especially my fellow Jews—in Rome	16:1-16, 23
3. Final Benedictions	16:20, 24

In the exordium (1:1-15) Paul seeks to win the confidence of his audience and to affirm the common values that he and the Romans share. He appeals to ethos—the common sense of what is morally right—in order to establish himself as an agent of the gospel for the nations (1:1, 5, 14). His sense of identity and mission seems to correspond to that of the Roman Christians (1:8); this shared understanding becomes the basis for his ministry among them (1:5-6, 13-15). As a result, Paul establishes his apostolic relations in the Roman churches and affirms those values that he and the Romans share as mutual agents of faith throughout the world (1:11-12).

Paul's concerns expressed in the exordium are restated in the closing of the letter (15:14–16:23). The peroration (15:7-8) reiterates and drives home his thesis in light of the "Jew first, then the Greek" idea that he first brought up in the proposition of 1:16. In the travelogue (15:14-29), Paul again conveys the ethos of his apostolic identity and mission. It is followed by an emotional appeal (pathos) for Roman support in prayer because of the opposition awaiting him in Judea (15:30-32).

Paul's desire that he and the Romans be mutually encouraged by his visit, first articulated in the exordium (1:12), is reiterated in the conclusion by his hope to be spiritually refreshed by their company. The apostle's recommendation of Phoebe (16:1-2)[29] and his list of greetings (16:3-16) underscore his concern to encourage hospitality among the Romans. In direct opposition to the common values of Paul and his readers are "those who cause dissension and scandal" (16:17-19).

[29] On the role of Phoebe in conveying to and interpreting Paul's letter in Rome, see Jewett, *Romans*, 943–48.

This rhetoric lends support to the disputed view that chapter 16 is an integral part of the letter.

Since it has been shown in the exordium and conclusio that Paul's major concern is to affirm common values, Romans 1:18–15:13 displays the evidence (confirmatio). Romans 1:16-17 serves as the proposition: the gospel is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. "The various terms in the proposition—power of God for salvation, everyone who has faith, Jew first, then Greek—are a partition underlying the structure of 1:18–11:36."[30]

The confirmatio consists of a probatio (1:18–11:36) and exhortatio (12:1–15:13). The probatio is concerned with Paul's doctrinal discussions on sin, divine judgment, justification/righteousness, faith, divine grace, union/identity with Christ, spiritual inheritance, Israel's unbelief, and God's sovereignty. These are the basic vices and virtues of the common faith that Paul shared with his readers.

Content

How common was this faith that Paul assumed on the part of his readers? Let us compare some of the central beliefs of Paul with the Judaism and Hellenism of his day. According to E. P. Sanders, Paul's teaching on salvation by grace would have found some agreement with the Jews he encountered in debate. Israel's obedience to the law was also viewed as a covenantal response to God's gracious election of Israel.[31] The verb, "be made righteous" (*dikaioumenos*, passive parti-

[30] Kennedy, *NT Rhetorical Criticism* (1984), 153–54; the following commentaries note the "various terms in the proposition" (including "righteousness") that are employed in the confirmatio of the letter, Jewett, *Romans*, 135–47; Hultgren, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, 70–79.

[31] Note, e.g., the following passages on divine election as a basis for (or preceding) Torah obedience: Exod 19:3-6; Deut 4:35-40; *Community Rule*, 1QS 3–4; *Mekilta* Bachodesh I, 5–6 (on Exod 20:2-3; Lauterbach 2:229–30, 238); *Sifra* Shemini pereq 12.4 (on Lev 11:45); Job 1:17-18, 25; 2:19-20; Pss Sol 9:9-11. See E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religions* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977); Simon J. Gathercole, "Covenantal Nomism," *EDEJ*, 494–96.

ciple), however, denotes salvation in Christ, according to Paul's usage (Rom 3:24; 5:1).[32]

What also distinguished Paul from his contemporary Jews were his views of both the death of Christ and participation in his death and resurrection. The death of Christ, for Paul, inaugurates the dawn of a new age and the birth of a new humanity. Participation in his death and resurrection frees one from the old covenant that required obedience to the law and places one in the realm of faith. The focus on participation in Christ's death and resurrection as the center of Paul's theology originated with Adolf Deissmann and Wilhelm Bousset.[33]

Further displacement from the center of Paul's teaching of grace *versus* Jewish legalism began with W. D. Davies, continued by his student E. P. Sanders, and was applied specifically to Paul's letters and Romans by N. T. Wright and James D. G. Dunn. This tendency is called the "new perspective on Paul," and it consists in interpreting Paul's negative references to "works of the law" and sometimes simply "works" not as critiques of a Jewish idea that keeping the Mosaic Law or doing good works effects a favorable relationship with God but rather that Paul's phrase "works of the law" or negative references to "works" simply refer to the three aspects of keeping the Mosaic Law that most separated Jews from their non-Jewish world of the first century: circumcision, Sabbath observance, and observance of dietary laws. This new perspective on Paul influences its proponents not to characterize Paul's gospel as justification by faith in contrast to keeping the Mosaic Law. In contrast, the new perspective leads its adherents to say that

[32] "Being justified" or "set right freely by his grace" includes "the restoration of honor" with God (Jewett, *Romans*, 281), but primarily being "placed in right covenant relation to God through God's act in Christ" by faith and also "the 'justification' of God's integrity in so acting," see also Richard B. Hays, "Justification," *AYBD* 3, 1131–32.

[33] See discussion in James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 390–412. The best-known early exponent of union with Christ was Albert Schweitzer, *The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle*, trans. W. Montgomery (orig. German, 1931; New York: Macmillan, 1956), who was indebted to earlier history of religious studies collected in Richard Reitzenstein, *Hellenistic Mystery-Religions: Their Basic Ideas and Significance*, trans. J. E. Steely (orig. German, 1926; Pittsburgh: Pickwick, 1978). See also Constantine R. Campbell, *Paul and Union with Christ: An Exegetical and Theological Study* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012).

Paul had no problem with Jews who wanted to keep the Law. For him, the gospel is all about participation in Christ's death and resurrection, which is marked by the Holy Spirit. The only problem that Paul has with the Law (Torah), according to the new perspective, is when it is used to divide those who live by it from table fellowship and church cooperation with those Gentile Jesus-followers who do not abide by Torah. So Paul, according to the new perspective, is simply advocating that those who follow the Torah within Christian communities not make circumcision, Sabbath observance, and observance of dietary laws issues that divide them and Gentiles.[34]

Since the publication of new perspective interpretations of Paul, others have gone back and checked the Jewish sources from which Davies and Sanders launched their attack on the stereotype of Paul preaching a liberation from the human activity of keeping God's law known as the Mosaic covenant (Torah). Friedrich Avemarie and Simon Gathercole have found that juxtaposed with the statements emphasizing God's grace that Davies and Sanders emphasized are also statements that affirm doing good works to receive divine favor (Pss Sol 9:4-5; 18:8; Sirach 51:30; Tobit 12:9; 2 Esdras 8:33; 2 Bar 14:12-13; 4 QMMT C 26–32; b. Sanhedrin 81a).[35] Avemarie and Gathercole question the new perspective because they see some justification for

[34] For further discussion on Paul and the Judaism of his day, see W. D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism: Some Rabbinic Elements in Pauline Theology*, 4th ed. (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980); Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*; James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8* and *Romans 9–16*, WBC 38A–B (Dallas: Word, 1988); *idem*, *The New Perspective on Paul*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007); N. T. Wright, *Justification: God's Plan and Paul's Vision* (Carol Stream, IL: IVP Academic, 2009); *idem*, *Paul: In Fresh Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009). The preceding works represent the grandparent (W. D. Davies), parent (E. P. Sanders), and proponents of the new perspective on Paul (J. D. G. Dunn and N. T. Wright).

[35] Friedrich Avemarie, *Tora und Leben: Untersuchungen zur Heilsbedeutung der Tora in der frühen rabbinischen Literatur* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1996); *idem*, "Erwählung und Vergeltung: Zur optionalen Struktur rabbinischer Soteriologie," *New Testament Studies*, 45 (1999): 108–26; *idem*, "Die Werke des Gesetzes im Spiegel des Jakobusbriefs: A Very Old Perspective on Paul," *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche* 98 (2001): 282–309; *idem*, "Paul and the Claim of the Law According to the Scripture: Leviticus 18:5 in Galatians 3:12 and Romans 10:5," in *Beginnings of Christianity*, ed. J. Pastor and M. Mor (Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi Press, 2005), 125–48; Simon J. Gathercole,

works of righteousness in the Judaism of the first century; they thus have sympathies with the so-called "Lutheran" position.[36] The new perspective has thus not captured the whole playing field of Pauline studies, but it has helped us see that Judaism in the first century included a recognition of God's grace to undeserving sinners while also expecting that those within Mosaic Law would keep its requirements.

Whether one holds to the traditional Lutheran idea that Paul is writing against legalistic Jews, the new perspective idea that Paul is writing against Jewish followers of Jesus who use the Mosaic Law's identity markers of circumcision, Sabbath observance, and food laws as dividing forces between Gentile and Jewish followers of Jesus, or the newer understanding of a Judaism that included both a recognition of God's grace with a concern for keeping the Mosaic Law, all interpreters agree that, for Paul, possession of the Spirit is a guarantee of the new, vital relationship offered by Christ. Paul's discussion of human sinfulness and the frustration of keeping the law in Romans chapter 7 therefore reflect the human condition without Christ.[37] It contrasts with Paul's view of the Christian life in chapter 8, which is not in the flesh but in the Spirit (v. 9) and fulfills what the law requires (v. 4). Even what appears to some as Paul's tendency toward universalism, eliminating distinctions between Jew and Greek, has significance only for those who are "in Christ."

Although his "in Christ" has some surface parallels with Greco-Roman influences (e.g., communion with deity in the mystery cults, "one humanity" in Stoicism and Gnosticism), Paul's vision of new

---

Where Is Boasting? Early Jewish Soteriology and Paul's Response in Romans 1–5 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002).

[36] For a forthright, contemporary treatment of this position, see also Stephen Westerholm, *Perspectives Old and New on Paul: The "Lutheran" Paul and His Critics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004); Charles H. Talbert shares similar concerns with Avemarie and Gathercole. He finds support in antiquity for covenantal nomism as *an ideal*, which was *often* legalistic in practice and synergistic in its soteriology and that Paul encountered much of it in *his* preaching of salvation by grace through faith, in "Paul, Judaism, and the Revisionists," in *Getting "Saved": The Whole Story of Salvation in the New Testament*, ed. C. H. Talbert and Jason A. Whitlark (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011), 11–34.

[37] This reading follows Origen's interpretation (who concedes that the voice of Rom 7:19-25 could be that of a beginning Christian) and the earlier interpretation of Augustine before his controversy with the Pelagians. See Mark Reasoner, *Romans in Full Circle: A History of Interpretation* (WJK, 2005), 68–73.

self-awareness was not determined by private mystical experiences or mythological speculations.[38]

Concerning good works, they remain in Paul as in Judaism a sign of God's gracious work within an individual and are a necessary characteristic of one who "walks in newness of life" and an expression of service to Christ as the Lord (e.g., Rom 8:1-17; 14:17-19; 15:2-3).[39] It is plausible that the Roman Christians affirmed most of these beliefs with Paul, especially if they were acquainted with some of his coworkers. Still, Paul is aware of a distinct version of the gospel that the Roman churches he is addressing had received (6:17; 16:17). He seeks to clarify his own gospel, especially on how God's righteousness comes through Christ to both Jews and Gentiles (1:16-17; 2:1-11; 4:9-12; 9:30-33), that Jesus is God's agent in judging human works, whether of those without the Law or of those within the Law (2:12-16; 14:10-12) and on the crucial point that his gospel actually calls people to holiness (3:5-8; 6:1-23; 8:1-11; 15:16).

Style of Argumentation

The similarities of Romans 1:18–2:16 (especially 2:16) and 16:25 with 1 Corinthians 1:10-17; 13:4-7; Galatians 1:6-9; 5–6; and other related texts,[40] prompt some scholars to see here *protreptic* rhetoric in

[38] On the notion of participation in Christ in the Pauline writings, see S. A. Cummins, "Divine Life and Corporate Christology: God, Messiah Jesus, and the Covenant Community in Paul," in *The Messiah in the Old and New Testaments*, ed. Stanley E. Porter, McMaster New Testament Studies (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007), 190–209; Robert C. Tannehill, "Participation in Christ: A Central Theme in Pauline Soteriology," in *idem*, *The Shape of the Gospel: New Testament Essays* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2007), 223–37; Daniel G. Powers, *Salvation through Participation: An Examination of the Notion of Believers' Corporate Unity with Christ in Early Christian Soteriology*, CBET 29 (Leuven: Peeters, 2001).

[39] Dunn characterizes Paul's movement from theology to ethics grammatically, as that of indicative ("because we are . . . with/in Christ") to imperative ("let us, therefore . . . "), *Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 626–31. He refers to the maxim of Pindar to King Hieron of Syracuse, *Pythian Odes* 2.72 (ca. 470 BCE), "become what you are" as illustrating this already/not yet tension in exhortations such as Romans 6:11, "consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ" (pp. 630–31).

[40] See also 1 Timothy 4:7b-10; Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*, exposing the fables of Platonism (3.1–6.2) and advocating the truth of Christianity

Romans. It is related to *paraenetic* and deliberative rhetoric but focuses more on the promoting of a *particular course* of action, especially calling the audience to a *new* way of life.[41] In Romans 1:18–2:16, Paul challenges his readers (whom he has *never before* seen nor taught) to forsake all the vices of pagan culture (cf. Ezek 23:37; Wis 13–14; 1 Cor 10:14-22; Philo *Spec. Laws* 3:37–42; *Sib. Or.* 3.37–8) and adhere to his gospel (Rom 1:16-17; 16:25). *Protreptic* language would be useful for Paul in his letter to the Romans to dissuade them of common vices and intensify adherence to common Christian values (as in demonstrative rhetoric).

In his argumentation, Paul also employs the dialogical style of the diatribe. This Socratic form of discussion was used by teachers in philosophical schools to censure the false views of students and lead them into truth (e.g., Epictetus, Plutarch, Seneca). These errors of students were exposed in the objections and false conclusions of an imaginary dialogue partner—i.e., interlocutor. By exposing these errors, the teacher was able to lead his students into a more correct understanding of philosophy and life.[42]

Since Paul's claims were controversial because of their implications for Christian behavior, he could effectively employ the diatribe form to indict false viewpoints and to lead his readers to a more correct understanding of his teachings. The dialogical forms in such places as Romans 2:1-11, 17-29; 3:1-9, 27-31; 4:1-12; 6:1-3; 9:14-24; 11:1-7; 14:10-15, therefore, do not necessarily contain polemics against opponents but are didactic devices to lead his Christian readers into truth by exposing error.

Basic features of the diatribe include the following points. (1) It begins with an apostrophe or indicting address to an imaginary interlocutor (Rom 2:1, 2, 17, 21; 9:19-20). Usually the interlocutor is a caricature of

---

(7.1–9.3); and the so-called Letter to Diognetus (ca. 200 CE), which denounces idols and superstitions (2–4) and sets forth the blessings that flow from the Christian faith (5–10), all argued to be *protreptic* rhetoric.

[41] Elliott and Reasoner, *Documents and Images* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2011), 69 (*protreptic*) and 265–66 (pagan vices); see also David E. Aune, "*Protreptic* Literature," in Aune, *Literature and Rhetoric*, 385; *idem*, "Romans as *Logos Protreptikos*," in Donfried, *Romans Debate*, 278–96.

[42] See Stanley Kent Stowers, *The Diatribe and Paul's Letter to the Romans*, SBLDS 57 (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1981); "Diatribe," in Aune, *Literature and Rhetoric*, 127–29.

a proud or pretentious person who is censured by an exposition of his moral contradictions or a rejection of his behavior. (2) Objections to the author's claims (e.g., Rom 3:1, 2, 7-8; 9:19; 11:19) or false conclusions drawn from the author's argumentation (3:9; 6:1, 15-16; 9:14; 11:1, 11) are raised either by the imaginary objector or the author himself. The author's reactions to them are diverse: abrupt (e.g., *mē genoito*), counter question, example, analogy, wise saying, or indicting address. (3) A dialogical exchange follows where the author or the interlocutor leads the question, but the author/teacher is in control and guides the discussion to its resolution (e.g., Rom 2:17-29; 3:27–4:12; 9:19-21). All of the above characteristics are found in the diatribes of Teles, Epictetus, Musonius Rufus, and Seneca (third century BCE–first century CE).

The diatribe convention plays a significant role in the teachings of Romans chapters 1–11. Paul was able to expose erroneous views and lead his readers into a more correct understanding of the Christian faith by this way of writing. The didactic function of the diatribe complements the epideictic rhetoric of Romans and assists Paul's central purpose in writing the letter (1:8-15; 15:14-15). In Romans Paul was not primarily concerned with polemics against opponents or with addressing specific church problems but with promoting the Christian faith through dialogue and persuasion as he introduces the Roman churches to his gospel.

The Issue of Context

The faith of the Roman churches was announced throughout the whole world and their support is a necessity for Paul's plans (1:8; 15:24). Even if one does not accept the greetings in chapter 16 as directed to people in Rome, Paul surely found out all he could about the Roman church before composing this letter. This is evident in his references to the teaching that they had originally received (6:17; 16:17). Paul's apology at Romans 15:14-16 is clear evidence that he considered his letter to be addressing actual issues in the Roman churches' communal lives that he thought should be changed. Of course we cannot identify five distinct viewpoints from five distinct groups in Rome that someone once thought could be identified in Romans 14:1–15:13.[43] But it is not as though Paul is simply recycling what he wrote in

[43] Cf. Paul Minear, *The Obedience of the Faith: The Purposes of Paul in the Epistle to the Romans*, SBT 19 (Naperville, IL: Alec R. Allenson, 1971), who argues that Romans was written to deal with five specific factions of

1 Corinthians 8–10 and generalizing it for the Romans. He does not mention "conscience" here as he does in 1 Corinthians. He mentions observance of a special day and wine drinking as well when addressing the Romans, so it is probable that he knows of the very issues that are proving to be divisive within the Roman churches (14:5-6a, 21). He is also more specific in his instructions on how to handle the problem of divisive behavior within a church than he is in 1 Corinthians. While his discussion in 1 Corinthians allows an interlocutor to have some of the haunting final questions, here in Romans Paul is much more clear that those with the more robust habits of consumption must respect those who are more sensitive about what they avoid and what they allow themselves to consume (14:14-21; cf. 1 Cor 10:29-30).

While we can affirm with Robert Jewett that Romans is an occasional letter that emerges out of Paul's own situation and his knowledge of the Roman churches' situations, we cannot stop there.[44] What makes this letter such compelling reading is its inherent tensions and its wide open vistas on to humanity's past and in to humanity's heart. So while Paul does know of what is going on in Rome as he writes this letter, that occasion is not the main context of the letter.

The central context of this letter is humanity viewed as either Jew or non-Jew (which Paul terms "Greek," "Gentiles," or "the nations") from before the Mosaic Law was given through the time in which Paul lived (when he questioned why the Jews were so oppressed by the Roman Empire and unbelieving that Jesus was God's Son) and on to a time when Jew and non-Jew will join together in praise to God (15:9-12).

Summary

Paul's letter to the Romans, which drew upon his earlier teachings, became his most influential writing in both the NT and church history. The apostle probably wrote his letter from Corinth around 56–57 CE before his trip to Jerusalem with a collection for the poor. His reasons for writing include: (1) a request for their prayer support as he journeys to Jerusalem, (2) the encouraging of Christian hospitality when he fulfills his plan to visit Rome on his way to Spain, (3) a concern to secure the Roman churches' collaborative support in bringing the gospel to

"weak" and "strong" Christians residing in Rome. See also Reasoner, *The Strong and Weak*.

[44] Jewett, *Romans*, 46–91.

the nations, and (4) a plan to establish a Roman base of operation for his westward mission to Spain, a mission that he may never have been able to complete.

Paul's purposes for writing Romans coincide well with epideictic rhetoric, a form of persuasion that attempts to secure an audience's sentiment by extolling common virtues. The arrangement of Romans seems to follow what is recommended by the rhetorical handbooks. This approach also appropriately focuses on the rhetorical situation of the author instead of the hypothetical situation of the readers. In Romans, Paul's theological arguments and practical exhortations are concerned with reinforcing the common values he shares with the Romans. The letter promotes doctrinal harmony, ecclesiastical solidarity, and Christian hospitality. In writing Romans, the apostle hopes to secure support for his ministry by intensifying adherence to the beliefs and virtues that he held in common with the Roman Christians.

CHAPTER 5

The Corinthian Correspondence

Introduction

The importance of Paul's first and second letters to the Corinthians cannot be underestimated. They are the most extensive, ongoing record of the development of a Christian community that we possess.[1] They also provide special insights into the everyday problems experienced by an early church and its founding leader. Finally, as written conversations between an apostle and his church, they are invaluable primary sources that are close to the events under discussion.

Our survey of 1 and 2 Corinthians involves a brief description of the city, the church, and the visits and letters to Corinth and discussions on the genre and structure. We also do our best to provide context for these letters and the letters from which they came, in terms of dates and settings.

The City of Corinth

In Paul's day, Corinth was a bustling city at the crossroads of commerce and travel (Pausanias, *Descr.* 2; Strabo, *Geogr.* 2.1.5–7). Although it was destroyed by the Romans in 146 BCE (Cicero, *Tusc.* 3.53; Polystratus, *Anth. Graeca* 7.297), and not rebuilt until Julius Caesar chose to start a colony there in 44 BCE, by the first century CE, Corinth enjoyed good trade and commerce (Plutarch *Mor.* 831A). With its port city of Cenchreae, it attracted different peoples and thus was a diverse city in terms of ethnicities and religions.[2]

[1] Dieter Georgi, "Corinthians, First Letter to the," *IDBSup* 181. See also Philip Towner, "Corinthians, Second Letter to," *NIDB* 1 (2006), 744–51.

[2] Donald Engels, *Roman Corinth: An Alternative Model for the Classical City* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990); Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000), 1–6.

Located on a narrow isthmus connecting the Aegean and Adriatic seas, Corinth benefited from both sea and land trade. Corinth's isthmus was the only land bridge connecting the Greek mainland with the southern peninsula, or the Peloponnesus. Sea merchants often preferred to stop there at one of the seaports (Lechaeum and Cenchreae) rather than risk the hazardous voyage around the rocky, southern tip of Greece (Pausanias, *Descr*. 2). Because of its strategic location, Corinth attracted many travelers, merchants, and sailors from all regions of the Mediterranean world. Some tradesmen from Corinth were known around the Mediterranean for their work—e.g., the bronze metalsmiths who made bronze mirrors, among other products (see 1 Cor 13:12).[3]

Fig. 10: Corinth, shop and temple viewed from the Agora. Image by C. Puskas.

Archaeological excavations of first-century Corinth have revealed a bustling marketplace with many shops, an impressive heating and cooling system, temples of Apollo, Poseidon, Demeter, and Asclepius, a theater, a gymnasium, and a *bēma* or tribunal court.[4] Nearby to the east, the popular Isthmian games were held every other year. Winners

[3] Thiselton, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 1068.
[4] Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul's Corinth* and his "Corinth," *NIDB* 1, 732–35.

in specific events of the Isthmian games would be crowned with celery leaf garlands (see 1 Cor 9:24-27). Excavations at the temple sites have revealed diverse religious practices involving cultic meals and sacrificial offerings. The discovery of the inscription "synagogue of the Hebrews" (second–third century CE) confirms the presence of Jews in Roman Corinth also mentioned in Acts 18:4-8.

The Churches at Corinth

Origin and Nature

The story of the founding of the Corinthian church is derived from 1 Corinthians and Acts 18. Upon Paul's arrival in the city, he worked with Priscilla and Aquila as a tentmaker or leatherworker (1 Cor 16:19; Acts 18:1-3).[5] When "Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia, Paul was occupied with proclaiming the word" (Acts 18:5; 2 Cor 11:9). At some point Paul baptized Crispus (probably) the synagogue ruler (1 Cor 1:14; Acts 18:8) and Gaius (1 Cor 1:14; Rom 16:23). The mention of Paul's appearance before Gallio in Acts 18:12-17 finds corroboration with the discovery of the Gallio Inscription found at Delphi, Greece (Achaia). It establishes Paul's appearance before Gallio the proconsul of Achaia around 51 CE.[6] Erastus, the city treasurer mentioned in Romans 16:23, might be the one who "laid (market pavement) at his

[5] R. Hock, *The Social Context of Paul's Ministry: Tentmaking and Apostleship* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980). Paul practiced this trade again when he was in Ephesus with Priscilla and Aquila (1 Cor 16:19). Although such work was considered lowly (Aelian, *Var. hist*. 2.1) and aroused the ire of some high-status Corinthians, Paul worked at this trade for self-sufficiency (1 Cor 4:12; 9:6; 1 Thess 2:9), to distinguish himself from hucksters and sophist peddlers (2 Cor 2:17), and to be free of the client-patron social web with all the commitments that it entailed; e.g., Epictetus 3.22.97; Juvenal, *Satires* 5.2.80; 5:110–13, 142–45; Peter Garnsey and Richard Saller, *The Roman Empire: Economy, Society and Culture* (London: Duckworth, 1987), 148–59; Witherington, *Acts*, 547–48.

[6] For inscription translation see Barrett, *NT Background*, 48–49; on dating see Jewett, *Chronology*, 38–40; and Gerd Lüdemann, *Paul, Apostle to the Gentiles: Studies in Chronology*, trans. F. Stanley Jones (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 163–64, endnotes 185–86. For inscription, see p. 49 in our chap. 3, and for more discussion, see p. 101 in this chapter.

own expense," according to an inscription that is possibly from the first century CE and still visible in Corinth.[7]

Fig. 11: Synagogue of Hebrews inscription and three menorah lampstands, Corinth. Image by C. Puskas.

The households of Stephanus and Chloe were also Paul's converts and thus original members of the church (1 Cor 1:11, 16; 16:15). Other persons belonging to the Corinthian church are listed in 1 Corinthians 16:15-17 (Stephen, Achaicus, Fortunatus) and Romans 16:21-23 (Jason, Lucius, Phoebe, Tertius, Gaius, Erastus, Quartus, Sosipater). Most of these persons have Roman names and represent the upper

[7] Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul's Corinth,* 34–35, and his "Corinth," *NIDB* 1, 732–35.

urban classes whose comfortable or excessive lifestyles may be evident in 1 Corinthians 10:27 and 11:18-21. But many of the Corinthian church members seem to have come from the lower social stratum (l Cor 1:26-29). A minority view of the church in Corinth is that its members were predominantly wealthy. Besides the texts in chapters 10 and 11 cited above, this is also supported by Paul's language at 1 Corinthians 1:5 and 4:8. Wilhelm Wuellner and Gail O'Day have provided support for this minority view by their arguments that 1 Corinthians 1:26 should actually be translated as a question anticipating a positive answer: "Look to your call, brothers and sisters, were not many of you wise according to the flesh, were not many strong, were not many of noble birth?"[8] We offer this alternative simply to emphasize that the complacency that comes from wealth may have been one aspect of the problem Paul faced in Corinth, at least in those who could afford to eat and hire prostitutes at respectable public meals (1 Cor 6:12-20; 8:10). Also, whether one understands the majority of the implied audience to be poor or wealthy, it is probable that part of the disunity exhibited at the Lord's Supper gatherings in Corinth involved discrimination against the poor who would not be fed as much as the homeowner's own friends (1 Cor 11:21).[9]

The Christians at Corinth, like most first-century believers, worshipped in house churches (Rom 16:5, 1 Cor 16:19). These were probably the larger homes of wealthier church members (e.g., Gaius, Stephanus, Erastus).[10] Houses from the Roman period have been discovered at

[8] Wilhelm Wuellner, "The Sociological Implications of I Corinthians 1:26-28 Reconsidered," *SE* 6, ed. E. A. Livingstone (Berlin, 1973), 666–72; Gail R. O'Day, "Jeremiah 9:22-23 and 1 Corinthians 1:26-31: A Study in Intertextuality," *JBL* 109 (1990): 259–67. Further discussion of the socioeconomic composition of the congregation in Corinth may be found in Justin J. Meggitt, *Paul, Poverty and Survival*, Studies of the New Testament and Its World (Edinburgh, 1998); Edward Adams and David G. Horrell, eds., *Christianity at Corinth: The Quest for the Pauline Church* (Louisville, 2004).

[9] Paul counters the abuses of banqueting distinctions with teachings on equality, humility, mutuality, and the recognition of God as divine patron deserving of honor and service; see Rachel M. McRae, "Eating with Honor: The Lord's Supper in Light of Voluntary Association Meal Practices," *JBL* 130 (2011): 165–81.

[10] A. J. Blasi, *Early Christianity as a Social Movement* (New York: Lang, 1988).

Corinth. The public rooms (i.e., the courtyard and dining room) were about fifty square meters each (approximately 538 sq. ft.). If homes like these became house churches, about twenty to thirty people could meet there. If we assume that the homeowner entertained his own friends in the dining room, other believers gathering at that house church may have had to stand in the inner courtyard and wait for the leftover food and wine. Paul's frustration with the inequities at the Corinthians' Lord's Supper celebration may have been due to the architecture of the houses in which believers met, along with the tendency in all cultures of the first-century Mediterranean world to differentiate in what was served to guests at public meals, depending on the guests' respective order, class, and status within society.

The close, informal settings of these house churches and the diversity of their members would have occasioned numerous conflicts. In 1 Corinthians we learn of tension between upper and lower classes, weak and strong members, and Jews and Gentiles on issues such as the *agapē* feasts held before the Lord's Supper (11:17-34), eating meat sacrificed to idols (8; 10:14–11:1), and the use of spiritual gifts (chapters 12–14). The tendency to cluster around favorite teachers (e.g., "I am of Paul," or "I am of Apollos") could have been reinforced by these social, religious, and ethnic distinctions (1 Cor 1:12; 3:4).

Problems in the Church

Under this category we will discuss the factions at Corinth and the misunderstanding of Paul's gospel that resembles an early form of Gnosticism. We will conclude with a discussion of Paul's opponents in 2 Corinthians.

Factions. The precise nature of the factions or parties at Corinth (1:10-13; 3:5-9, 21-23) is difficult to determine, though it is probable that church members maintained loyalties to the teacher they most respected, much as students in Greek schools did.[11] Paul provides no clear evidence whether the four distinct names he cites—Paul, Apollos, Cephas, Christ—each represented an actual, separate group in the church or not. Cephas, or Peter, is briefly mentioned in several passages (1:12; 3:22; 9:5; 15:5). Even though Paul ranks him with the apostles

[11] Bruce Winter, *After Paul Left Corinth: The Influence of Secular Ethics and Social Change* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001), 31–43.

(1 Cor 9:5; 15:5; Gal 2:9), he opposed Cephas in Antioch for inconsistent behavior toward the Gentiles (Gal 2:11-14). The concerns of the "weaker" brother that may arise out of a Jewish sensitivity for food laws may mirror the Cephas group (1 Cor 8:10-11; 10:28-29; Rom 14:2b, 14). It is unclear what is meant by "I am of Christ" (1:12; 2 Cor 10:7). It may signify renouncement of all human leadership, direct access to Christ as in Gnosticism, or direct succession to the historical Jesus through an original apostle.

There seem to be a sufficient number of clues within the letter of 1 Corinthians that there was an Apollos group in Corinth. Paul lists "Apollos" immediately after his own name in 1 Corinthians 1:12. Then he refers to Apollos in ways that seem most readily explainable by a rivalry between groups that followed him and Apollos. References only to himself and Apollos occur again at 1 Corinthians 3:4-6 and 4:6. At the very end of the letter, he writes that he has encouraged Apollos to visit them, as if to show that he and Apollos are on cordial terms and that he is not threatened by the idea of Apollos visiting the church (1 Cor 16:12). While Paul, Apollos, Cephas, and Christ are mentioned again in the list of 3:22-23, it is unclear if all four of these are actual groups in Corinth or if Paul is simply rounding out his encouragement toward unity in the way he began it in 1:12. We conclude that the main concern regarding the unity of the Corinthian church was in a rivalry between those loyal to Paul and those loyal to Apollos. The legacy of Apollos's influence in this community is also seen in Acts 18:24-28. Some of Paul's discussion on human and divine wisdom in 1 Corinthians 1:18–3:4 could be interpreted as corrective teaching for those who were attracted to Apollos, if he indeed was eloquent, educated in Hellenistic philosophy, and acquainted with wisdom traditions, as his portrait in Acts 18:24 and the following context indicates.

It is evident as well that there was a Pauline group in the church of Corinth. The household of Stephanus seems to represent some of Paul's first converts in Asia (1:16; 16:15). It will be argued later that they were probably the bearers of the Corinthian letter of questions and may have caused a division in Corinth by insisting that Paul alone, and not Apollos, respond to it (1 Cor 7:1). Crispus and Gaius were also baptized by Paul and probably found great significance in this, significance which Paul attempts to minimize in order to promote unity (1:14-17). The image of Paul as founder of a new religious group is questioned by Paul in this letter in such a way as to challenge the existence of a group that was loyal to Paul in ways that fractionalized the community

(1:13-17; 3:5-15, 21-23). Paul's insistence that these groups are a sign of the church's dysfunction and immaturity is completely countercultural for his audience. Paul's repeated criticism of the groups and various calls for unity would have been surprising to his readers, just as many of us would be surprised if someone told us to give up exclusive respect for certain church leaders in order for the church to become more unified.[12]

Gnosticism. Although the identities of the factions are uncertain, the nature of the Corinthian misunderstanding has some resonance with a Gnostic tendency.[13] Gnostics (second–third century) advocated spiritual liberation from the physical world and identity with the divine through revealed knowledge (Gk. *gnōsis*). This process of salvation is revealed in elaborate myths of heavenly beings emanating from a transcendent deity that often included a story of separation from and restoration to the divine realm.[14] In Corinth, some church members regard themselves as both mature and spiritual and are proud of their knowledge (1 Cor 8:1-3). Perhaps for them all things are permitted (6:12; 10:23). As possessors of the Spirit, they perhaps claimed to have already experienced a spiritual resurrection (15:29-32). For them the heavenly Christ held precedence over the earthly Jesus (1 Cor 12:3). The preaching of the cross is regarded as foolishness by them, and this is perhaps why Paul adamantly emphasizes it in 1 Corinthians 1:18-32. They also attached great significance to spiritual displays, such as speaking in tongues (1 Cor 14:1-40). In this way, they assert their superiority over those who are not possessed by the Spirit. Such characteristics have similarities with what is known of a later, more fully developed Gnosticism.[15]

[12] 1 Cor 1:10-17; 3:1-11, 21-23; 4:1-8; 16:12. Winter, *After Paul Left Corinth*, 40–43.

[13] "Paul's opponents at Corinth resemble not only Cynic-Stoics but also followers of a certain Prodicus, definitely Gnostic according to Clement of Alexandria," Robert M. Grant, *Paul in the Romans World: The Conflict at Corinth* (WJK, 2001), 51. On references to Prodicus, see *Strom*. 3.29–30; 7.41.1; 1.69.6. The followers of Prodicus were elitist and more libertine than the more ascetic and mystical Valentinian Gnostics, according to Clement of Alexandria (ca. 180–200).

[14] See Birger A. Pearson, *Ancient Gnosticism: Traditions and Literature* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007).

[15] (1) As a possible influence: Schmithals, *Gnosticism in Corinth*; but see R. McL. Wilson's response to Schmithals in "How Gnostic Were the Corinthians?" *NTS* (1972–73): 65–74. (2) As a definite influence: There was much

It seems that some of those in the Corinthian church who claimed special knowledge (Gk. *gnōsis*) had differing views from Paul on the future of Christian existence. First Corinthians 15:12 provides evidence that some in the church were saying there is no resurrection of the dead. It is possible that these "enlightened" members had the mistaken idea that the resurrection had *already* happened and that this meant that whatever one did with one's body was now lawful (1 Cor 6:12; 10:23). In discussions of 1 Corinthians, this possible reconstruction of a mistaken idea in Corinth that Paul is seeking to correct is commonly called "realized eschatology" or "over-realized eschatology."[16] In contrast, Richard Hays insists that there is evidence in 1 Corinthians of believers not thinking enough about the future. The problem in their thinking was not realized eschatology, Hays argues, but rather a failure to think about God's future judgment of them.[17] While we cannot be certain what view of the future was animating the Corinthian believers' behavior and claims, the text of the letter is at least clear that judgment and resurrection are still future, so it still matters very much what believers do with their bodies since they have not yet inherited a resurrection body.[18]

---

in Paul that was attractive to second-century Gnosticism—e.g., Rom 7:18, 24; 8:9; 1 Cor 9:27; 15:50; 2 Cor 4:4—and Christian Gnostics like Valentinus of Rome (early second century) utilized material from Matthew and possibly Paul. The Nag Hammadi documents from Egypt contain many diverse Gnostic writings, dating from the second to third centuries CE. See Robinson, *Nag Hammadi Library*. (3) Nevertheless, it must be noted that the discovery of elaborate Gnostic systems with no apparent Christian influence—e.g., *Paraph. Shem, Apoc. Adam*—seem to indicate that Gnosticism had an earlier and more independent development than many critics are willing to concede; see John D. Turner, *Sethian Gnosticism* (Louvain: Peters, 2001). In conclusion, Wallace F. Taylor writes that "the most we can say is that Paul's opponents were 'proto-Gnostics,' people whose positions could easily develop into Gnosticism or whose views could be understood as Gnosticizing," *Paul: Apostle to the Nations* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012), 169, see also I. Dunderberg, "Valentinus," in Marjean and Luomanen, *Second Century*, 72–76.

[16] Anthony Thiselton, "Realized Eschatology at Corinth," *NTS* 24 (1977–78): 510–26.

[17] Richard B. Hays, *First Corinthians*, Interpretation (Louisville: John Knox, 1997), 70.

[18] 1 Cor 6:18-20; 9:24-27; 15:32-34, 58.

The special knowledge that some people claimed in Corinth seems also to have led them to two extremes in sexual morality. On the one hand, the church was proud of its member who was sleeping with his father's wife, and some members of the church employed prostitutes to accompany them at special meals and provide satisfaction after the meal (1 Cor 5:1-13; 6:12-20). While the former case involved a crime not even allowed by Roman law, the latter was considered standard behavior for men in Corinth.[19] On the other hand, there apparently was another group that advocated celibate behavior within marriage, as 1 Corinthians 7:1-7 shows.[20] Claims to special knowledge, and the more developed Gnosticism of the second century, often led into either libertarian or ascetic behavior. Paul's church in Corinth was no exception.

Bruce W. Winter, whose doctoral dissertation originally proposed "an antithesis to the vibrant thesis of Gnosticism in New Testament Studies" (xiv), writes in his revision that it is just as reasonable to understand that Paul has encountered sophists in Corinth than it is to say that he has encountered Gnostics there:

> Even if the evidence for incipient Gnosticism was found in the first century in Alexandria and Corinth it would be necessary to explain the presence in Philo's corpus of numerous references to sophists which were used by him in a technical sense and not as a prejorative comment on others. The same holds true for the Corinthian epistles, where "the debaters of this age" are mentioned and the rhetorical terminology and argumentation are used against them in 1 Corinthians 1–4 and 2 Corinthians 10–13.

Winter makes the following case for Paul's encounter with the sophists:

1. The key issues of "quarrels" and "zealousy" are typical of sophistry (1 Cor 1:11; 3:3).
2. Paul's *modus operandi* is best understood in light of the sophistic conventions of "coming" to a city and operating in it (1 Cor 2:1-5; 9).
3. What Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 1–4 provides a substantial critique of the sophists.

[19] Winter, *After Paul Left Corinth*, 44–57 (on 1 Cor 5); 82–93 (on 1 Cor 6:12-20).

[20] Ibid., 225–32.

4. His own ministry was criticized (2 Cor 10–12) by those trained in Greek rhetoric and Paul responds to them in language that they would acutely understand.[21]

Paul's Opponents. From 1 Corinthians with its factions and errors, we move to 2 Corinthians with specific opponents within and without the church.[22] These opponents were probably itinerant preachers. In 2 Corinthians chapters 10–13 we learn the following points. First, Paul's opponents attacked him for his lack of eloquent speech (10:1, 10), visionary experiences (12:1), and miraculous powers (12:12). These opponents also accused him of foolishness (11:16-19) and dishonesty (12:16-19). Second, they boasted of worldly things (11:16, 18), their advantage as Hebrews (11:22), and their status as apostles (11:12-15; 12:11-12). Third, these rival teachers are Jewish in ethnicity and may have represented a Jewish Christianity that Paul opposed.[23]

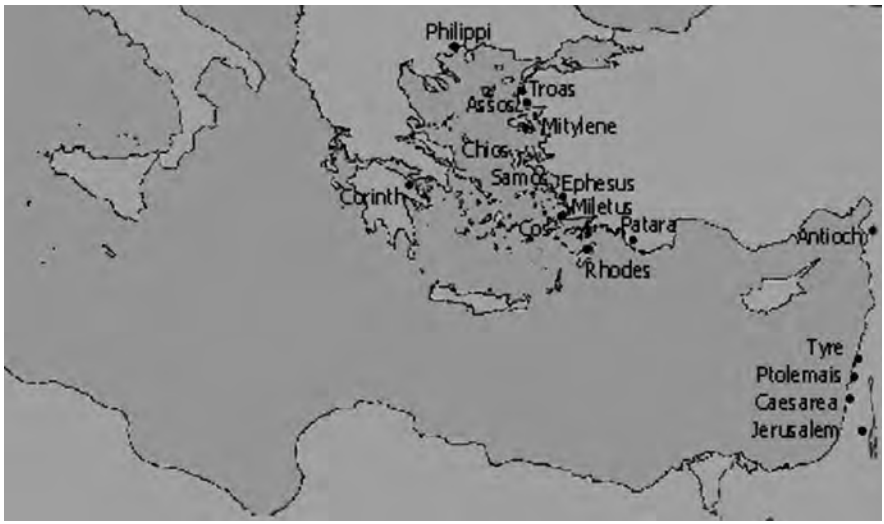
Although Paul makes no attempt to refute the practice of circumcision in 2 Corinthians as he does in Galatians, he writes in this letter that the Christian life is to be lived by the Spirit and not by the letter of the Mosaic Law (2 Cor 3:4-18). Paul differed with these teachers

[21] Winter, *Philo and Paul among the Sophists* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), 245 (block quotation), 13, 245–46 (enumerated items); see chaps. 8–10 for further exposition of these Corinthians texts.

[22] 2 Cor 11:4. Georgi, *The Opponents of Paul*; Reimund Bieringer, "Der Gegner des Paulus im 2. Korintherbrief," in *Studies on 2 Corinthians* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1994), 181–221; Jerry L. Sumney, *Identifying Paul's Opponents: The Question of Method in 2 Corinthians* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990); *idem*, *"Servants of Satan," "False Brothers" and Other Opponents of Paul* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999); Margaret Thrall, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians* 2 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000), 926–45; Murray J. Harris, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005), 67–87; Thomas R. Blanton IV, *Constructing a New Covenant: Discursive Strategies in the Damascus Document and Paul's Second Corinthians* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), 109–21. For the references in this footnote we are indebted to Thomas R. Blanton IV, "Spirit and Covenant Renewal: A Theologoumenon of Paul's Opponents in 2 Corinthians," *JBL* 129 (2010): 130, n. 2.

[23] Blanton, "Spirit and Covenant Renewal," 129–51, argues that Paul's opponents in this letter teach that Gentile observance of the Mosaic Law activates the new covenant.

regarding how righteousness is to be achieved (2 Cor 3:9; 6:7; 11:15).[24] Paul's opponents boasted of their privileged status and perhaps believed that ecstatic speech, miracles, tongues, and visions were manifestations of a divine nature. In response to these attacks from his opponents and the errors they introduced, Paul boasts in the Lord who alone commends his ministry (10:17-18). If he must boast of himself it will be of his sufferings for Christ so that God's power is perfected in him (12:9-10). His authority is given from the Lord for the upbuilding of the churches (10:8; 13:10). He is devoted to the truth and prays for the restoration of the Corinthians (13:8-11).



Map C: Eastern Mediterranean world under Rome. Image by C. Koester.

The Visits and the Letters

There are many theories about the number of visits to Corinth and letters sent there. A basic outline will be provided and some of the theories considered. Our goal in surveying these visits and letters is not to reconstruct what actually happened in Paul's tumultuous relationship with this church but to understand better the details and texture of the letters we do have—1–2 Corinthians.

[24] Ibid. Blanton suggests that Paul calls himself an "agent of the new covenant" and that his opponents were known as "agents of righteousness" (2 Cor 3:6; 11:15).

Paul's First Visit (1 Cor 1:14-16; 2:1; 16:15; Acts 18:1-18)

According to Acts 18, Paul visited Corinth after leaving Athens. He spent eighteen months in the city, first preaching at the synagogue and then at the house of Titius Justus. The mention of Crispus as Paul's convert (v. 8) is supported by 1 Corinthians 1:14.

The dating of Paul's appearance before Gallio, which ended his eighteen-month stay, finds possible confirmation in the Gallio inscription at Delphi. A case has been made for the Corinthian proconsulship of Gallio to be from July 51 to July 52, with Paul's appearance near the beginning (summer of 51).[25] This would locate Paul's departure from Corinth to the summer of 51 and his arrival eighteen months before this date to the winter of 49.

Paul's First Letter (mentioned in 1 Cor 5:9-11)

The letter of 1 Corinthians found in our New Testaments is not the first letter Paul wrote to them. This is because 1 Corinthians itself refers to an earlier letter that Paul sent them. One piece of advice from this letter is generally summarized and then clarified in 1 Corinthians 5:9-11. It seems that Paul's injunctions "not to associate with sexually immoral people" pertained only to those who professed to be Christians (v. 11). It was misinterpreted by the Corinthians, however, to perhaps mean withdrawal from all immoral people (v. 10). Some have argued that 2 Corinthians 6:14–7:1 was originally this letter and that when 2 Corinthians was copied, this section was inserted into the text since 2 Corinthians 7:2 follows so smoothly from 2 Corinthians 6:13.

However, this suggestion that 2 Corinthians 6:14–7:1 represents Paul's first letter, described in 1 Corinthians 5:9, is unlikely, since the vocabulary of this unit in 2 Corinthians is non-Pauline and its contents seem to support the Corinthian interpretation and not Paul's viewpoint as clarified in l Corinthians 5:9-11.

The basic arguments that 2 Corinthians 6:14–7:1 is a non-Pauline interpolation seem convincing. First, the text interrupts the logical flow of the passage. The topic of 6:11-13 (appeal for openness) abruptly changes at v. 14 and is not resumed until 7:2. The vocabulary and style

[25] Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul's Corinth*, 161–69, 219–21 (Gallio inscription); Jewett, *Chronology*, 38–40 (summer of 51); Thiselton, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 29–32. See also in our chap. 3, "Gallio inscription," 49.

of 6:14–7:1 are also different from the rest of 2 Corinthians and Paul's letters. Its contents are similar to the ethical dualism found in both the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Gnostic writings.[26] Third, this stark interruption of thought and style is unlike the ways Paul typically digresses or leaves anacolutha (loose ends), such as we see in Romans 2:15-16; Galatians 2:4-6; 2 Corinthians 1:22-23; 5:14–6:2.

Report from Corinth (1 Cor 1:11)

The nature of the oral report is as follows:

> For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there are quarrels among you, my brothers and sisters. What I mean is that each one of you says, "I belong to Paul," or "I belong to Apollos," or "I belong to Cephas," or "I belong to Christ." (1 Cor 1:11-12)

These factions probably involved the allegiance of certain members to a particular leader, such as occurred in the philosophical schools of Stoicism: e.g., "I belong to the school of Chrysippus," or "I belong to the school of Cleanthes." In addition to factions, it is possible that Chloe's household reported other problems to Paul: e.g., misbehavior in connection with the Lord's Supper (11:17-34), the case of the man living with his father's wife (5:1-2), and the issue of lawsuits among church members (6:1-8).

The Letter from Corinth (mentioned in 1 Cor 7:1). Based on a close reading of 1 Corinthians and especially Paul's phrase "Now concerning . . . " with which he introduces new topics as if he is responding to a list of questions, the letter from Corinth probably posed the following questions.[27] (1) Would it not be better for our married couples to forego sexual relations (7:1-5) and our unmarried members to remain single (7:25, 36) so that they may become better Christians? (2) Can

[26] Hans Dieter Betz, "2 Cor 6:14–7:1: An Anti-Pauline Fragment?" *JBL* 92 (1973): 88–108; G. D. Fee, "II Corinthians vi.14–vii.1 and Food Offered to Idols," *NTS* 23 (1977): 140–61; M. E. Thrall, "The Problem of II Cor vi. 14–vii.1 in Some Recent Discussion," *NTS* 24 (1977): 132–48. See discussion in Harris, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 11–25.

[27] Adapted from J. C. Hurd, *The Origin of First Corinthians* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1983), 168 (summary) and table 7. Hurd's research has more recent support in Thiselton, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 34–39.

Christians eat meat, part of which had been previously sacrificed to a pagan idol (8:1)? (3) Should women be veiled during worship (11:5)? (4) Is speaking in tongues the foremost gift of the Spirit (12:1; 14:6)? (5) Is it necessary to believe in the future resurrection of the body (15:12, 35)? (6) What plans have been made regarding the collection for the Jerusalem church (16:1)?

It might be assumed from these questions and Paul's responses that the apostle to the nations did not give his congregations blueprints for faith and practice. He probably explored with them the possibilities and ranges of a living message and faith. Paul's early preaching at Corinth focused on the crucified Christ and probably included content on the nearness of the Lord's return and a gospel free from the demand of living like Jews. Such preaching in the crossroads of the Mediterranean world would have evoked from the Corinthian church members a variety of questions about ethics, doctrine, and worship.

Paul's Second Letter (1 Cor). Paul is writing from Ephesus before the Feast of Pentecost (1 Cor 16:8, 19; see Acts 19), probably in the spring of 55 CE. Because of the way Paul recommends them to the congregation (1 Cor 16:15-18), Stephanus, Fortunatus, and Achaicus probably brought the letter to Corinth. Even though the letter contains some discrepancies in content and style, most scholars do not regard them as sufficient to argue that 1 Corinthians is a composite of two or more letter fragments.[28] First Corinthians was no doubt written in the midst of a busy apostolic ministry. It may have been laid aside from time to time and taken up again after an interval. Therefore it lacks both the uniform arrangement of a church manual and the specific directives of a bishop's encyclical. It provides advice and directives on a variety of issues by an apostle who wanted to secure church harmony

[28] Some alleged discrepancies in 1 Corinthians are: (a) In 4:19, Paul says he will come to Corinth but in 16:5-9 says that his coming will be delayed; (b) In 10:1-22, Paul takes a rigorous attitude against food sacrificed to idols, but in 8:1-13 and 10:23–11:1, abstinence in these matters is simply an act of charity on behalf of the weaker brother; (c) Paul abruptly returns to his apostolic defense in chapter 9 after completing it in 1 Corinthians 1–4. Paul's rhetorical techniques can account for most of these discrepancies in thought. See discussion in C. K. Barrett, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, HNTC (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), 12–17; Thiselton, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 40–50; Margaret M. Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation* (WJK, 1991), 2–5, 298–99.

and maintain credibility with his readers, while rendering his church more holy.

The Visits of Timothy (1 Cor 4:17; 16:10-11; Acts 19:21-22). In 1 Corinthians it appears that Timothy has already made one visit ("I sent to you Timothy," 4:17) and a second one is proposed ("And if Timothy should come," 16:10). The Corinthians probably received 1 Corinthians between these two visits. During the first visit, Timothy reminded the Corinthians of Paul's "ways in Christ" as the apostle taught them "everywhere in every church" (4:17). The arrival of 1 Corinthians seems to have followed this first visit. In 16:10, Paul seems to anticipate Timothy's second visit after they read his letter. Therefore Timothy is probably not the carrier of the letter. It is plausible that Acts 19:21-22 refers to this second visit of Timothy. Paul may have sent him and Erastus to Achaia (Corinth) via Macedonia, since the apostle planned to visit both regions before going to Jerusalem.

Paul's Second Visit (2 Cor 2:1; 12:14; 13:1). The following circumstances prompted this "painful visit." A crisis in Corinth broke out, probably when Timothy was there. It was caused by certain Jewish-Christian missionaries who opposed Paul's authority (2 Cor 10:10; 11:23; 12:6-7). Timothy, evidently at a loss to deal with it, returned to Ephesus with news of the problem. On receiving Timothy's report, Paul makes his second visit to Corinth to handle personally the situation. This he later refers to as the "painful visit" (2 Cor 2:1). It can be deduced from chapters 1–2 and 7 that Paul's visit was a failure and he was forced to return to Ephesus in great distress.

Paul's Third Letter (material from 2 Cor 10–13). After the failure of his "painful visit," Paul writes his third letter "out of much affliction and anguish of heart and with many tears" (2 Cor 2:4; see also 7:8). We are not certain about the contents of this letter, although some have postulated that it is partially preserved in 2 Corinthians 10–13.

The theory that 2 Corinthians 10–13 represents material from a separate letter seems convincing.[29] First, the tone of these chapters is very different from that of 2 Corinthians 1–9. They are more polemi-

[29] C. K. Barrett, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, HNTC (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), 11–14; Victor Paul Furnish, *II Corinthians*, AYB 32A (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984), 30–48; Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, WBC (Dallas: Word, 1986), xxxviii–lii; Harris, *Second Epistle to*

cal and sarcastic than the earlier chapters. Second, a different attitude toward self-commendation occurs in chapters 10–13. In 2 Corinthians 1–9, the apostle appears to deplore self-commendation (3:1; 5:12), whereas in 2 Corinthians 10 he readily commends himself, though one must admit that he seems self-conscious and at times apologetic while boasting here (2 Cor 10:8, 12-13; 11:1, 16-17, 21b, 30; 12:1, 11).

Third, 2 Corinthians chapters 1–9 may even presuppose that the church in Corinth had already received a letter containing what we know as 2 Corinthians chapters 10–13. In 2 Corinthians 13:2, 10, Paul speaks of the possibility of making another painful visit, whereas in 1:23–2:1, the severe letter has already served as a substitute for this visit. In 13:10, Paul appears to be writing the "severe letter," whereas in 2:34, it has already been written. Fourth, the geographical situation of 2 Corinthians 10–13 appears to be Ephesus (10:16; 11:9-10) instead of Macedonia, where he probably wrote chapters 1–9 (e.g., 2:13; 7:5; 8:1; 9:2). It seems plausible, therefore, that 2 Corinthians 10–13 comes from a letter separate from and probably written before the letter from which chapters 1–9 originally came.[30] Later, these sections of letters were combined either by Paul or by one of his disciples, probably when Paul's letters were being collected and copied for wider circulation.

The Visit of Titus (2 Cor 2:13; 7:6-7; see Acts 20:1). After Paul had left Ephesus he went to Troas (2 Cor 2:12), but when he did not find Titus there he went on to Macedonia (2:13) with great consternation (7:5). Titus finally arrives and comforts Paul with a report that the church crisis is over (7:6-16).

Paul's Fourth Letter (2 Cor 1–9). Paul responds to the encouraging news from Titus with 2 Corinthians 1–9. It contains words of comfort, self-authentication, and commendation for the Corinthians. This letter is sent from Macedonia around 56 CE. The carriers are probably Titus and "two other brothers" (2 Cor 8:16-18, 22).

At least two problems have surfaced concerning the integrity of 2 Corinthians 1–9. First, chapters 2:14–7:4 (excluding 6:14–7:1) interrupt a narrative discourse that opens in 2:1-13 and closes at 7:5-16.

---

the Corinthians, 29–42; Calvin Roetzel, *2 Corinthians* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2007), 24–35 .

[30] David G. Horrell, *The Social Ethos of the Corinthian Correspondence: Interests and Ideology from 1 Corinthians to 1 Clement* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), 296–312.

Second Corinthians 2:14–7:4 is apologetic in tone, whereas 1:1–2:13 and 7:5-16 are informative and conciliatory. This break in narration, however, can be explained by Paul's rhetorical structure of a narration of facts (1:8–2:13) before his defense and a peroration (7:2-16) that recapitulates the arguments of the narration.[31]

The second argument against the integrity of 2 Corinthians 1–9 is weightier, because it concerns chapters 8 and 9 as separate letters.[32] They are not only different in tone and content from chapters 1–7 but also appear to be independent of each other. Chapter 8 does not continue the conciliatory theme of chapter 7. Also, in 2 Corinthians 7, Titus has just returned from Corinth, whereas in chapter 8 he is ready to depart for Corinth (8:6, 16-24). Next, chapter 9 takes up the issue of the collection as if it had not been previously discussed, though it has been thoroughly aired in what we know as the previous chapter. It also appears to be addressed to all Achaia. Finally, the delegation in chapter 8 seems to have already departed (8:16-24), whereas in chapter 9 they are about to be sent (9:3-5).

Although these points argue impressively for chapters 8 and 9 as independent units, Paul could have hastily incorporated them into one letter during his stay in Macedonia. Our outline supports 8 and 9 as combined letters added to 1–7. Rhetorically, chapter 9 functions as the peroration of chapter 8, recapitulating several points that seek a contribution for the relief of the Jerusalem church. Some of the chronological discrepancies might be explained by suggesting that Paul composed chapters 8 and 9 on two separate occasions. Together, chapters 8–9 also serve as an effective conclusion to 2 Corinthians in a manner similar to the structure of 1 Corinthians, which also ends with discussion on the collection (16:1-4).

Even though what we know as 2 Corinthians 8 and 9 could have been composed earlier in Ephesus, chapters 1–9 as a whole now seem to reflect the same Pauline setting in Macedonia (1:16; 2:13; 7:5; 8:1; 9:2, 4). This observation may indicate the location of their final compilation. The idea that Paul sent chapters 8 and 9 later on two separate occasions is definitely possible. But how does one account for the length

[31] See our outline of 2 Corinthians for details on how the peroration (7) functions as a summary of key points in the narration (1:8–2:13).

[32] See H. D. Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1985), 3–36, 129–44; see survey of opinion in Harris, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 25–29.

of time involved in sending them as separate correspondences? We find less difficulty in maintaining that Paul himself combined these letter units (our 2 Cor chapters 1–7; 8; 9) within a short period of time and sent them to the Corinthians as a letter ca. 56 CE.

Paul's Third Visit (2 Cor 12:14; 13:1; 15:25-27; see Acts 20:2-3). In 2 Corinthians 12:14 and 13:1, Paul is planning to make a third visit to Corinth. Romans 15:25-27 indicates a visit was made to gather the collection for the saints in Jerusalem. Acts 20:2-3 probably refers to this same visit before Paul takes his final voyage to Jerusalem. This third visit to Corinth probably occurred in the winter of 56–57 CE when Paul wrote his letter to the Romans from Cenchreae (Rom 16:1-2).[33]

The preceding survey of Paul's extended relationship with the church in Corinth cannot stand as a completely reliable documentary of the contacts between them. Its purpose is to offer an explanation that can account for some of the breaks and inconsistencies that appear when these letters are closely read. In the end, these letters were canonized in their current form, and their current form is how they are read in believing communities. We turn now to examine the literary features of these letters as they occur in our Bibles.

The Genre and the Structure of 1 Corinthians

Because Paul is unable to be at Corinth, he writes a letter. First Corinthians contains all the features of an early Christian letter: opening, 1:1-2; thanksgiving, 1:4-9; body, 1:10–4:21; exhortations and instructions, 5:1–16:18; and closing, 16:19-24.

What type of letter is 1 Corinthians? It is much longer than letters of antiquity, and the identities of its author and recipients (i.e., the apostle Paul [and his associate] to the church in Corinth) give the letter a public and official character. Because of these features, 1 Corinthians seems to be a letter-essay, not unlike Romans in this respect. Letter-essays were written by authoritative persons such as philosophers (Plato, Epicurus),

[33] See our discussion of the dating of Romans (p. 68). See also Jewett, *Chronology*, 40–44, 10–102, and his *Romans*, 18–23. Other works on Pauline chronology to consult are: John Knox, *Chapters in a Life of Paul*, rev. ed., ed. Douglas R. A. Hare (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1987); Gerd Lüdemann's chapter, "A Life and a Chronology of Paul" in his *Paul: The Founder of Christianity* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus, 2002), 22–64.

biographers (e.g., Plutarch), and statesmen (Isocrates, Cicero); they also envisioned a wide audience. The "you" in the letter-essay might be a specifically named person known in the author's circle of friends, but the way the letter-essay is written and published makes it clear that the "you" is directed at any one who will read the essay.

It is not enough to identify 1 Corinthians as a letter-essay. In order to better grasp the form and content we must ask: what type of discourse did Paul use to accomplish his purpose? Therefore, as in Galatians, we will examine 1 Corinthians rhetorically.

First Corinthians contains both apologetic and advisory features. Like Galatians, it shares some apologetic features, such as a defense of Paul's apostolic ministry. This classes it with judicial rhetoric (e.g., 1 Cor 1:10–4:41; chapter 9).[34] 1 Corinthians also seeks to give advice to its readers on various questions and problems in their communities.[35] This advisory form of persuasion is called symboleutic or deliberative rhetoric.

Deliberative persuasion is different from judicial, because it is concerned with decision making in a political (or public assembly), not judgments in a courtroom. It is also to be distinguished from demonstrative or epideictic rhetoric, because it emphasizes what is practical or expedient over what is praiseworthy or honorable. Judicial rhetoric is concerned with just actions of the past and demonstrative focuses on virtues in the present, but deliberative concentrates on what is expedient for the future.

The following works are examples of deliberative rhetoric. In the *Third Philippic* of Demosthenes (341 BCE), the famous statesman advises the Athenian assembly to unite with other Greek city-states in opposition to Philip of Macedon. Isocrates, in his *On Peace* (355 BCE), proposes before the political assembly of Athens a policy of lasting peace between Athens and her neighbors. The speech of John Milton to the English Parliament on the liberty of unlicensed printing, *Areopagitica* (London, 1644), also employs most of the techniques

[34] J. B. Chance, "Paul's Apology to the Corinthians," *PerRelSt* 9 (1982): 146–55.

[35] 1 Cor 5:1-2; 6:1-5; 7:1-7; 8:1-3; 11:17-22; 12:1-3; 15:12, 35; 16:1-4. Galatians also contains both apologetic (chapters 1–2) and deliberative rhetoric (chapters 5–6) since these last chapters are NT ethical exhortations (*pareneses*) that seek to persuade or dissuade the addressees in their decision making on various ethical issues.

of deliberative rhetoric. Deliberative rhetoric poses the questions: Is it possible? Is it honorable? Is it expedient? It will be shown in later chapters that the ethical exhortations of Ephesians reflect similar rhetorical concerns.[36]

Guidelines for deliberative (judicial and demonstrative) speeches are found in the rhetorical handbooks of Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian.[37] The structure and arrangement of 1 Corinthians coincides with some of these rules in the rhetorical handbooks.

There are specific parallels to the rhetorical arrangement of 1 Corinthians. Letters 7 and 8 of Plato to friends of Dion in Sicily are the first example. The seventh letter has already been discussed as an autobiographical defense of Plato before the Sicilians, comparable to Galatians 1–2. It will also be shown that 1 Corinthians 1:10–4:21 and chapter 9 function in a similar manner. In letter 8, however, Plato advises his readers on certain issues. This "deliberative" function is similar to what we find in 1 Corinthians 5–16, excluding chapter 9.[38] Second, in Isocrates' *Address to Philip of Macedon* (346 BCE), the Athenian statesman first justifies his own actions (1–23) before advising King Philip on what noble and honorable policies to pursue (24–153). Third, reminiscent of 1 Corinthians 7:1, the following letters are responses by teachers to questions asked by their students: Epicurus, Letter II, *To Pythocles,* and Plutarch, *On the Tranquility of the Mind* (in *Moralia* 1012B–1030C).[39]

[36] Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 20–23, provides more examples of deliberative rhetoric from the ancient world.

[37] Most of the editions of classical rhetoricians are found in the Loeb Classical Library or LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press). For full bibliographical information on major handbooks, see Kennedy, *NT Rhetorical Criticism* (1984), 161–62, and Burton Mack, *Rhetoric and the New Testament* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), 103. For discussion of 1 Corinthians as deliberative rhetoric, see Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, especially 33–64.

[38] On 1 Corinthians 9 as a defense of Paul's apostleship, see Thiselton, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 666–78.

[39] The letters of Epicurus are found in Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, book 10 (vol. 2 of LCL). Plutarch's letter is found in *Moralia* (vol. 6 of LCL).

The Rhetorical Structure of 1 Corinthians

The rhetorical structure of 1 Corinthians is particularly valuable to study, since the letter is clearly in conversation with questions and reports that have come from the church in Corinth.[40]

Part 1: A Defense of Paul's Authority

I.	Epistolary Prescript	1:1-3
	a. Senders and Addressees	1:1-2
	b. Salutation	1:3
II.	Proem (Thanksgiving)	1:4-9
III.	Proposition: Divisions at Corinth[41]	1:10

[40] This section presupposes the following studies: Barrett, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 28–29; N. A. Dahl, "Paul and the Church at Corinth," in *Studies in Paul* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1977), 49–55, and *idem*, "The Crucified Messiah," in *Jesus Christ: The Historical Origins of Christological Doctrine* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991); Alexandra Brown, *The Cross and Human Transformation: Paul's Apocalyptic Word in 1 Corinthians* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995); Kennedy, *NT Rhetorical Criticism* (1984). For other commentaries and studies, see D. L Balch, "Backgrounds of I Corinthians VII: Sayings of the Lord in Q; Moses as an Ascetic *Theios Anēr* in 2 Cor 3," *NTS* 18 (1972): 351–64; S. Bartchy, *Mallon Chrēsai: First Century Slavery and the Interpretation of 1 Corinthians 7:21* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1973); H. D. Betz and M. M. Mitchell, "Corinthians, First Epistle to the," *AYBD* 1, 1139–48; T. Callan, "Prophecy and Ecstasy in Greco-Roman Religion and 1 Corinthians," *NovT* 27 (1985): 125–40; H. Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975); E. E. Ellis, "Paul and His Co-workers," *NTS* 17 (1971): 437–53; G. D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987), 386–403; R. H. Gundry, *Sōma in Biblical Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976); A. E. Hill, "The Temple of Asclepius: An Alternative Source for Paul's Body Theology?" *JBL* 99 (1980): 437–39; E. Käsemann, "The Pauline Doctrine of the Lord's Supper," in Käsemann, *Essays*, 108–35; J. J. Klijne, "We, Us and Our in I and II Corinthians," *NovT* 8 (1966): 171–79; K. A. Plank, "Resurrection Theology: The Corinthian Controversy Reexamined," *PerRelSt* 8 (1981): 41–54; G. Theissen, *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity: Essays on Corinth* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1982); W. Willis, *Idol Meat in Corinth: Pauline Argument in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1985); Wire, *Corinthian Women Prophets*; Margaret M. Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation*; Thiselton, *First Corinthians* (2000).

[41] The similarities of 1 Corinthians 1:10-17 (no divisions) with 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 ("love does not insist on its own way"); also Romans 2:16;

IV.	Narration of Facts	1:11-13
V.	Refutation of Charges: Corinthians are responsible for their divisions	1:14-17
VI.	God's Power and Wisdom Comes through Paul's Proclamation of Crucified Christ	1:18–4:21
	a. Wisdom: Divine *versus* Human	1:18-30
	b. Paul Preached Christ Crucified[42]	2:1-5
	c. Spiritual Wisdom	2:6–3:4
	d. Paul and Apollos Cooperate	3:5-23
	e. Christ's Servants the Apostles	4:1-13
VII.	Recapitulation and Appeal	4:14-21

Part 2: Paul Responds to Specific Issues in Corinth

VIII.	Remove the Immoral One among You[43]	5:1-13
IX.	Respect the Boundaries of the Church	6:1-11
	a. Settle Disputes inside Church	6:1-8
	b. Those in Christ, Sinners No Longer	6:9-11
X.	The Body for Christ, Not Prostitutes	6:12-20
XI.	To Marry or Not to Marry?	7:1-40

16:25; 1 Timothy 4:7b-10; Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* (3.1–6.2; 7.1–9.3); and the Letter to Diognetus (2–10) prompt some scholars to see here *protreptic* rhetoric. It is related to paraenetic and deliberative rhetoric but focusing more on the promoting of a *particular course* of action, especially introducing the audience to a *new* way of life, see Elliott and Reasoner, *Documents and Images*, 69; David E. Aune, "Protreptic Literature," in Aune, *Literature and Rhetoric*, 383–86.

[42] Alexandra Brown writes that in 2:1-5, "Paul brings the initial statement of paradox (1:18-25) more directly and personally into the language of showing." She continues, "To know and proclaim the power of Christ crucified is to show the power of the cross in one's own weakness," Brown, *The Cross and Human Transformation*, 102. Slavoj Žižek, Slovenian philosopher and cultural critic, has stated that Paul's version of "the Christ-event on the cross is something that cannot be domesticated but that inherently upsets the status quo on every level of the cosmos," in John Milbank, Slavoj Žižek, Creston David, *Paul's New Movement: Continental Philosophy and the Future of Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos, 2010), 15. See also by Žižek, *The Puppet and the Dwarf: The Perverse Core of Christianity* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2003).

[43] On 1 Cor 5, see Richard B. Hays, *The Conversion of Imagination: Paul as Interpreter of Israel's Scripture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005), 21–24.

XII.	Food Offered to Idols[44]	8:1–11:1
	a. Idol Meat in a Henotheistic World	8:1-13
	b. Paul Gives Up His Rights	9:1-27
	c. Take Care Lest You Fall	10:1–11:1
XIII.	Order in Worship	11:2–14:40
	a. Male and Female in Worship	11:2-16
	b. Celebrate Lord's Supper	11:17-34
	c. Spiritual Gifts	12:1–14:40
	1. One Body, Many Gifts[45]	12:1-31a
	2. Love, the Better Way	12:31b–13:13
	3. Prophecy and Order	14:1-40
XIV.	Christ the Firstfruits of Future Resurrection[46]	15:1-58
XV.	The Letter's Postscript	16:1-24
	a. Contribute for Jerusalem Poor	16:1-4
	b. Travel Plans	16:5-9
	c. Paul Commends Timothy and Apollos	16:10-12
	d. Watch, Stand Firm, Do All Things in Love	16:13-14
	e. Paul Commends, Appeals, Greets, Blesses	16:15-24

Our rhetorical outline presupposes a close connection between Paul's judicial argument (1:10–4:21; chapter 9) and the deliberative sections of his letter (chapters 5–16, excluding chapter 9). The first reason for making this assumption is rhetorical: Paul wishes first to reestablish his authority and refresh the Corinthians regarding his qualifications before advising them. The second reason is historical. It has been suggested that the household of Stephanus, who were converts

[44] See discussion of this unit in Thiselton, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 607–13.

[45] For careful analysis, especially on the manifestations (gifts) of the Spirit, see Gordon Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987), 582–625.

[46] See Thiselton's outline of 1 Cor 15 as deliberative rhetoric (pp. 1177–78), "A. Reality of Christ's Resurrection, 15:1-11"; "B. The Dire Consequences of Denying the Resurrection: First *Refutatio*, vv. 12–19, and *Confirmatio*, vv. 20–34"; "C. How Can 'The Resurrection of the Body' Be Intelligible and Conceivable: Second *Refutatio*, vv. 35–49," and "D. *Confirmatio*, vv. 50–57, *Peroratio*, v. 58," in his *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000), 1182–1306 (outline and commentary).

of Paul, may have caused a division at Corinth by insisting that "the letter of questions" be sent to Paul, rather than to Apollos or Cephas.[47]

The practical topics of immorality (chapter 5), marriage (chapter 7), freedom in behavior (chapters 8–10), and the speculative questions on immortality (chapter 15) were often used in rhetorical exercises called *progymnasmata* at Hellenistic schools, though from what we know of first-century Corinth, these topics as used in Paul's letter directly addressed situations among Paul's church members there.[48] Throughout his letter, Paul also employs the rhetorical devices of deliberative rhetoric: e.g., appeals to the common good, or what is beneficial or expedient, leaving certain matters for the audience to decide while warning about the seriousness of their decisions. Finally, in accordance with the rhetorical handbooks, Paul makes use of: enthymemes (compressed inferences), amplification of a topic, examples from the past, Scripture proofs, maxims, appeals from his own character (ethos) to the audience's emotions (pathos) or reason (logos), comparisons, rhetorical questions, and recapitulation (also called peroration).

First Corinthians provides valuable insight into the everyday problems of one of Paul's churches. It also discloses early traditions of the primitive church, such as the kerygmatic formula (15:3-7), the Lord's Supper (11:23-25), and apocalyptic material (7:29-31; 15; 24–28).[49] In 1 Corinthians 16 we are introduced to the ecumenical effort of the collection for the saints in Jerusalem, which is discussed further in 2 Corinthians chapters 8–9 and Romans 15:25-27.

The Genre and Structure of 2 Corinthians

Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians, as we encounter it today, shares with 1 Corinthians the qualities of a public, Greco-Roman letter-essay that contains both judicial and deliberative rhetoric. Despite the fact that it may be a compilation of material from several letters, it fits the format of letters written in the Mediterranean world of Paul's day, with sender, addressees and greetings listed in the letter opening (1:1-2),

[47] Dahl, "Paul and Church at Corinth," 49–55.

[48] See Winter, *After Paul Left Corinth*, for a thorough consideration of how Paul's letter of 1 Corinthians addresses behaviors in Paul's church that arise out of first-century Greek culture.

[49] On the apocalyptic nature of 1 Corinthians, see Brown, *The Cross and Human Transformation*.

then a thanksgiving (1:3-7), followed by the letter body (chaps. 1–13), and brief application (parenesis, 13:11). At its conclusion we find greetings (13:12-13) and Paul's benediction (13:14).[50]

The length of this composite letter, sent by an "apostle of Christ Jesus" to members of "the church of God which is at Corinth," gives the letter a public and official character. As it stands now in our New Testament, 2 Corinthians can certainly be grouped with Paul's other major letters, Romans and 1 Corinthians.

Like 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians contains both judicial and deliberative rhetoric. As described above in the "Visits and Letters" section of this chapter, these forms of persuasion are so distinct that, along with the breaks in thought flow, especially seen in 6:14–7:1 and chapters 8 and 9, most scholars maintain that 2 Corinthians is a composite letter containing parts of two to five letters.[51] In 2 Corinthians 1:1–7:16, Paul employs judicial rhetoric in defending his ministry as sincere, from God, and focused on proclaiming Christ. In 2 Corinthians chapters 8–9, deliberative rhetoric is used to urge the Corinthians to complete the collection for the Jerusalem church that they had begun in the previous year. Finally, in 2 Corinthians 10–13, Paul again employs judicial rhetoric to refute the charges of his opponents that his letters are strong but his physical presence and actual speech are weak (2 Cor 10:10). In the letter we know as 2 Corinthians, the order in which these parts of the letter occur—with the rhetorical import being judicial, deliberative, and then judicial—probably does not reflect the order in which Paul wrote this material. We have noted above that 2 Corinthians chapters 10–13 may well represent the harsh or "tearful" letter that Paul mentions in 2 Corinthians 2:4—"For I wrote you out of much distress and anguish of heart and with many tears." If these parts of our 2 Corinthians come from three or four different letters, the letter openings of the letters now reformatted as 2 Corinthians chapters 8–9 and the letter now reformatted as 2 Corinthians 10–13 have been removed or otherwise lost, as well as the letter closings of the originally composed letters that now come to us as 2 Corinthians chapters 1–7 and chapters 8–9.

[50] For further information on the characteristics of the letter essay, see M. L. Stirewalt, "Form and Function of the Greek Letter Essay," in Donfried, *Romans Debate*, 147–71.

[51] For discussion, see Barrett, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 11–14; W. H. Bates, "The Integrity of 2 Corinthians," *NTS* 12 (1965): 56–59; Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 30–48; Martin, *2 Corinthians*, xxxviii–lii.

Rhetorical Structures of 2 Corinthians[52]

The Rhetorical Structure of 2 Corinthians 1:1–7:16

I.	Epistolary Prescript	1:1-2
II.	Proem: God, who is bountiful in mercy and comfort, comforts Paul in his affliction, and extends this comfort to the Corinthians believers	1:3-7
III.	Paul narrates his relationship with Corinthians to refute charges against him	1:8–2:13
	a. In Asia, God delivered Paul from affliction and death	1:8-11
	b. Paul's relations with the Corinthians are explainable and above reproach	1:12–2:13
	1. Paul's actions are marked by simplicity and sincerity	1:12-14
	2. Paul explains canceled visit and justifies "tearful" letter	1:15–2:11
	c. Paul updates Corinthians on his situation in Macedonia	2:12-13
IV.	Proposition of Letter: Paul's ministry is prompted by God, intimately tied to Christ, and sincere	2:14-17
	a. Paul is like a captive in a triumphal parade	2:14a
	b. Paul is like a sweet smelling sacrifice[53]	2:14b-16
	c. Paul is sincere and not out for profit	2:17
V.	Paul supports the proposition	3:1–6:10
	a. Corinthians can testify to Paul's upright character	3:1-3
	b. Paul's ministry is from God, is life-giving, and authenticated by the Holy Spirit, so he is a genuine agent of the new covenant	3:4–4:1
	c. Paul's ministry is characterized by truth and the light of Christ	4:2-6
	d. Paul's ministry is authenticated by his apostolic sufferings	4:7-12

[52] This outline has been developed with consideration given to Kennedy, *New Testament Rhetoric*, 86–96, and commentaries on 2 Corinthians by Barrett, Betz, Furnish, Harris, and Martin. See also the cautious review of rhetoric in Thiselton, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 41–52.

[53] On the commercial imagery in this text, see Tzvi Novick, "Peddling Scents: Merchandise and Meaning in 2 Cor 2:14-17," *JBL* 130, no. 3 (2011): 543–49.

	e. The power of Christ's resurrection and the Holy Spirit energize Paul's ministry, indicating he will receive a glorified body	4:13–5:10
	f. New creation in Christ grounds Paul's work of reconciliation	5:11–6:10
VI.	Peroration—concluding summary—of Paul's defense	6:11–7:16 (excluding 6:14–7:1)
	a. Paul appeals for an open heart, employing pathos	6:11–7:4
	Interpolation: Do not be coupled together with unbelievers	6:14–7:1
	b. Paul discloses more of his situation	7:5-16
	1. Titus brings encouraging news	7:5-7
	2. Paul again explains his "tearful letter" (see 2:3-4)	7:8-13a
	3. Paul rejoices over good news from Corinth	7:13b-16

The Rhetorical Structure of 2 Corinthians 8–9

Address of Letter: Brothers		8:1
Salutation (lost or removed by editor?)		
I.	Macedonians provide example for Corinthians[54]	8:1-9
	a. Paul describes the Macedonians' generosity	8:1-5
	b. Paul applies this example to the Corinthians	8:6-7
	c. Paul lays pastoral and theological foundation for his appeal	8:8-9
II.	Proposition in form of an appeal: "Complete what you began!"	8:10-11
III.	Paul develops his proposition	8:12–9:5
	a. Corinthians' surplus is for others' lack	8:12-14
	b. Scripture proof for idea of surplus supplying others' lack (Exod 16:18)	8:15

[54] Of the passages in which Paul promotes his collection for the poor saints in Jerusalem (Rom 15:25-32; 1 Cor 16:1-4), 2 Cor 8–9 is the longest (ca. 39 verses), see Harris, *Second Corinthians*, 87–101. David J. Downs examines the practice of benefaction in associations to contextualize Paul's organization and relief strategy, *The Offering of the Gentiles: Paul's Collection for Jerusalem in Its Chronological, Cultural, and Cultic Contexts* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 73–118.

c. Titus is Paul's trustworthy agent for collection in Corinth 8:16-24
d. Paul anticipates boasting of Corinthians' generosity 9:1-5

IV. Peroration—concluding summary—of Paul's appeal 9:6-15
a. Human generosity brings divine generosity 9:6
b. People should give voluntarily and God will enable them 9:7-8
c. Scripture proof for idea of God's generous provision (Ps 112:9) 9:9
d. Paul offers blessing and thanksgiving 9:10-15
1. May the God of providence cause you to increase (Isa 55:10; Hos 10:12) 9:10-14
2. Thanks be to God for his incalculable gift! 9:15

Letter closing (lost or removed by editor?)

The Rhetorical Structure of 2 Corinthians 10–13[55]

Address and salutation (lost or removed by editor?)

I. Paul sets the framework for his appeal for the Corinthians to follow his leadership: he operates with divine, not fleshly, power 10:1-6
a. Paul admits that he is weak in person, strong in his letters 10:1
b. Paul ministers with divine power, his rivals with the flesh 10:2-6

II. Proposition: Though weak in person and strong in his letters, Paul is still the one the Corinthian church should follow 10:7-11

III. Argument: Paul is a better leader than rival leaders in Corinth 10:12–12:13
a. Unlike rivals, Paul only boasts according to God's measure 10:12-18
b. Paul's *pro bono* work, prompted by love, proves authenticity 11:1-15
c. Paul has suffered more in ministry than rival leaders 11:16-33

[55] See Federick W. Danker, "Paul's Debt to the *De Corona* of Demosthenes: A Study of Rhetorical Techniques in Second Corinthians," in *Persuasive Artistry* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991), 262–80.

d. Paul has received a divine revelation and a physical ailment to keep him humble; thus he is a divinely approved leader[56] 12:1-10
e. Paul concludes: "I am not inferior to the 'super-apostles'" 12:11-13

IV. Peroration—concluding summary—of relationship and authority 12:14–13:10
a. Paul plans a third visit as a parent seeking to give to children 12:14-18
b. Paul intends to find Corinthians united behind him 12:19-21
c. Paul officially describes upcoming apostolic visit 13:1-10
1. With evidence from witnesses, weak Paul will confront sinners and rebellious with divine power (Deut 19:15) 13:1-4
2. Paul appeals with pathos and logos for church's loyalty 13:5-9
3. Paul has written to build up the Corinthian church 13:10

V. Paul closes with greetings and blessing 13:11-13
1. "Rejoice . . . greet one another . . . all the saints greet you" 13:11-12
2. Paul offers a blessing from the Trinity for the Corinthians 13:13

Second Corinthians pulsates with the life of the apostle. Even though penetrating in his attack of the rival leaders, he is eager to forgive the penitent. Devoted to the church members of Corinth, he willingly suffers and ministers without a salary for their benefit. Although discouraged by failure, his faith in God and participation in the death and resurrection of Christ empower him with inner strength. Paul's concept of apostleship is one of the distinct contributions of this letter of 2 Corinthians. For Paul, apostleship and the gospel are inseparable. As an apostle, Paul is called to proclaim the gospel of Christ. His self-sacrifice in ministry establishes a high standard for all who

[56] Sze-kar Wan, *Power in Weakness: Conflict and Rhetoric in Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians* (TPI, 2000).

would follow his work. In his person, the apostle seems to embody the gospel of the cross.[57]

Summary

In this chapter we sought to acquaint you with Paul's Corinthian correspondence. First, we looked at the city of Corinth and information relevant for an understanding of the letters known as 1 and 2 Corinthians in the New Testament. Second, we examined the Corinthian church, comprised of rich and poor, Jew and Gentile, with factions within and opponents of Paul on the outside. Third, we outlined and described Paul's three visits and four letters to Corinth. Fourth, we noted that the genre of 1 Corinthians is an open-church letter by an apostle and outlined 1 Corinthians chapters 1–4 as a defense of Paul's

[57] For further study on the teachings of 2 Corinthians, see W. R. Baird, "Letters of Recommendation: A Study of 2 Cor 3:1-3," *JBL* 80 (1961): 166–72; H. D. Betz and M. M. Mitchell, "Corinthians, Second Epistle to the," *AYBD* 1, 1148–54. G. R. Beasley-Murray, *Baptism in the New Testament* (London: Macmillan, 1962); J. D. G. Dunn, "2 Cor III.17—'The Lord is Spirit,"' *JTS* 21 (1970): 309–20; E. E. Ellis, "II Cor v. 1–10 in Pauline Eschatology," *NTS* 62 (1960): 211–24; J. T. Fitzgerald, "Paul, the Ancient Epistolary Theorists, and 2 Cor 10–13," in *Greeks, Romans, and Christians* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), 190–200; V. P. Furnish, "The Ministry of Reconciliation," *CurTM* 4 (1977): 204–18, and *Theology and Ethics in Paul* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1968); Robert Hodgson, "Paul the Apostle and First Century Tribulation Lists," *ZNW* 74, no. 112 (1983): 59–80; B. Holmberg, *Paul and Power: The Structure of Authority in the Primitive Church as Reflected in the Pauline Epistles* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1978); R. Jewett, *Paul's Anthropological Terms: A Study of Their Use in Conflict Settings* (Leiden: Brill, 1971); E. A. Judge, "St. Paul and Classical Society," *JAC* 15 (1972): 19–36; T. Y. Mullins, "Paul's Thorn in the Flesh," *JBL* 76 (1957): 299–303; G. Mussies, *Dio Chrysostom and the New Testament* (Leiden: Brill, 1972); G. G. Collins, "Power Made Perfect in Weakness: 2 Cor 12:9-10," *CBQ* 33 (1971): 528–37; W. Schmithals, *The Office of the Apostle in the Early Church* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1969); R. C. Tannehill, *Dying and Rising with Christ: A Study in Pauline Theology* (Berlin: Töpelmann, 1967); N. H. Taylor, "The Composition and Chronology of Second Corinthians," *JSNT* 44 (1991): 67–87; S. H. Travis, "Paul's Boasting in 2 Cor 10–12," *SE* 6, ed. E. A. Livingstone (Berlin: Akademie, 1973), 527–32; Calvin J. Roetzel, *2 Corinthians* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2007); Margaret Thrall, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000); Frank Matera, *II Corinthians: A Commentary* (WJK, 2003).

authority by means of judicial rhetoric and 1 Corinthians chapters 5–16 as advice from the apostle on various church issues by means of deliberative rhetoric.

Fifth, we noted that though the genre of the final form of 2 Corinthians is that of an open letter written by an apostle, its composition history is probably more complex than any of the other letters by Paul in our New Testament. Second Corinthians 1:1–7:16 and chapters 10–13 are refutations of charges against Paul by means of judicial rhetoric. Second Corinthians 6:14–7:1 is a non-Pauline interpolation. Chapters 8–9 are a complete unit of deliberative rhetoric encouraging the Corinthians to complete their church's contribution to the Jerusalem collection.

The letters of Paul to the church of Corinth are significant as the most extensive, continuous record of an early Christian community. They also provide us with special insights into the everyday dealings of the apostle with one of his key churches and, thus, allow us to listen in on the frustrations and joys of Paul, the apostle to the nations.

CHAPTER 6

The Letter to the Galatians

Introduction

Paul's letter to the Galatians may be characterized as both a response to controversy and a spur to more controversy. Its writing was occasioned by the question of whether observance of Mosaic Law, including ritual circumcision for men, should be considered a requirement for Gentiles who wanted to follow Jesus the Jewish Messiah and experience the salvation he brings. Its reception into the Christian canon of scriptures is a major cause for the eventual separation of Christianity from Judaism. Galatians won the admiration of the anti-Jewish heretic Marcion (second century CE) and aroused disdain among the Jewish Christian Ebionites.[1] Martin Luther's *Commentary on Galatians* (1535) was the manifesto of the revolt against the medieval church of his day with Paul's salvation by grace alone—the cornerstone of the Protestant Reformation. Luther wrote: "The Epistle to the Galatians is my epistle. To it I am as it were in wedlock. It is my [wife] Katherine."[2] Galatians also is a significant document in the reconstruction of Paul as the apostle to the Gentiles and Peter as apostle to the Jewish people, understood by F. C. Baur (mid–nineteenth century) to mean that they represented two opposing forms of Christianity. This controversial reconstruction still exerts great influence in NT studies. One cannot escape the defensive tone and aggressive edge toward the pro-Torah teachers in this letter, especially when it is read through Baur's construct.[3]

[1] On the Ebionites and Paul see pp. 228–35 and on Marcion see pp. 286–90 in Meeks and Fitzgerald, *St. Paul* (2007).

[2] Martin Luther, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians (1535)*, trans. Theodore Graebner (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1949), iii–v.

[3] Ferdinand Christian Baur, *Paul, The Apostle of Jesus Christ, His Life and Work, His Epistles and His Doctrine*, 2 vols. (1845; London and Edinburgh:

Occasion

There are several different views on the occasion of Paul's writing his letter to the Galatians. We will look at the traditional so-called Lutheran view, the new perspective, theosis, and the Torah-friendly position.

1. One noteworthy reconstruction of the occasion for the Letter of Galatians that exemplifies what is traditionally called the Lutheran view of this letter is from Hans Dieter Betz.[4] Let us place ourselves in different roles at a different place and time. We are a group of Gentiles in Asia Minor in the mid-first century CE. We belong to several house churches founded by the apostle Paul. For many months we rejoiced in our new spiritual home of faith in Christ as God's Messiah, but some problems have now occurred. Some of our church members are struggling with temptations of the flesh (greed, lust, immorality), and we do not know how to help these people. Many of us feel that perhaps our religious status and the basic message about the Christ from Paul are not enough to cope with the challenges among us.

   About this time some Jewish-Christians appear with a religious program whose demands appeal to many of us. This system is an assortment of various moral and ceremonial observances that are to be essential for our identity as people of God. One external observance in this recommended system is the circumcision of all males as a sign of one's participation in the covenant that made the Jewish people partners with God. This Jewish-Christian group is also skeptical of Paul's teaching, believing it to be a popular, libertarian dismissal of the holy law that God gave through Moses to his chosen people. We consider the offer to submit to this set of requirements and many from our group embrace them wholeheartedly; many males are circumcised and begin to observe all

---

Williams and Norgate, 1873–75); see also Scott J. Hafemann, "Baur, F. C." *Dictionary of Major Biblical Interpreters*, ed. Donald J. McKim (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2007), 177–81.

[4] Hans Dieter Betz, "In Defense of the Spirit: Paul's Letter to the Galatians as Document of Christian Apologetics," in *Aspects of Religious Propaganda in Judaism and Early Christianity*, ed. E. Fiorenza (Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 1976), 99–114.

the ceremonial laws. In the process, much of the teaching from Paul on salvation by God's grace through faith in Christ has been set aside. Paul has received news that many of us have gone over from the churches he started to this other group. He considers our adherence to the teachings of the Jewish Christians as a serious error and threat to his entire work among us. This scenario came to be a traditional, twentieth-century understanding of the situation to which Paul addressed his letter to the Galatians.

2. Scholars in recent years have offered alternative readings of the situation. One of the most influential alternative readings is from the new perspective on Paul. According to this perspective, the Jewish faith of Paul's day was not legalistic. It was rooted in God's gracious election in the Mosaic covenant. The God who graciously delivered Israel from Egypt gifted them with the Torah. Israel's obedience to Torah is thus a grateful response to God who delivered and chose Israel. Paul's Letter to the Galatians is not about the question of receiving initial salvation, or what is called, by shorthand, "getting in." It is rather a question of "staying in" either through Torah observance (nomism) or by faith. Paul is not concerned with a doctrinal question of how a Gentile gets saved as much as he is concerned about the question of how a Gentile stays actively participating in the people whom Christ is forming for himself from the nations (i.e., by faith or circumcision). This is a summary of the new perspective's approach to Galatians.[5]
3. The next view of Galatians that we will consider, which we are calling "theosis," is a reaction to the Lutheran reading of Galatians. As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, this letter was an integral part of the fuse that ignited the Protestant Reformation in the sixteenth century. Its role in this change was to provide a template for Martin Luther to explain the ecclesiastical situation of the Electorate of Saxony. Martin Luther read the Judaizing teachers whom Paul opposes in Galatians as Catholic leaders. The requirement of circumcision and keeping the Torah

[5] "Obedience maintains one's position in the covenant, but it does not earn God's grace as such" in E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977), 420; Kent L. Yinger, *The New Perspective on Paul: An Introduction* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2011), 9–12; Simon J. Gathercole, "Covenantal Nomism," in *EDEJ*, 494–46.

in the foreground of the letter of Galatians served as a cipher, in Luther's teaching, for the encouragement to buy indulgences, do penance, enter celibate life (if called to be clergy), and consider one's own merits when evaluating one's status before God. In Luther's rhetoric, this Catholic teaching came even to absorb the expectation that people would live moral lives as a requirement for salvation. In response to this sixteenth-century understanding, the pendulum has begun to swing back. Some Lutherans, especially theologians from Finland, have argued, contrary to a forensic declaration of justification by the Reformers, that "Christ is really present in faith itself" and that the "indwelling presence of Christ" leads one to righteousness and holiness.[6]

A Finnish exegete, Kari Kuula, states that Paul's criticism of the law and human action is criticism directed against Gentile attempts to keep the Mosaic Law but not against human behavior to live a moral life. He writes, "Paul's own soteriology is quite legalistic and it lays much weight on human works. It is best described by the terms 'synergism' or 'co-operation.' It is synergism and co-operation of grace and works, or of faith and obedience. This legalistic aspect has been hidden from the Pauline scholarship, including Lutheran tradition."[7] It has also led to a more restricted

[6] Tuomo Mannermaa, *Christ Present in Faith: Luther's View of Justification* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005) and "Justification and Theosis in Lutheran-Orthodox Perspective," in *Union with Christ: The New Finnish Interpretation of Luther*, ed. Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 25–41; Veli-Matti Karkkainen, *One with God: Salvation as Deification and Justification*, Unitas Books (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2004). On Galatians, see Michael J. Gorman, *Inhabiting the Cruciform God: Kenosis, Justification, and Theosis in Paul's Narrative Soteriology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009), 63–72. See also Ian Christopher Levy, *The Letter to the Galatians*, The Bible in Medieval Tradition (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011).

[7] Kari Kuula, *The Law, the Covenant and God's Plan*, vol. 2 of *Paul's Treatment of the Law and Israel in Romans*, Publications of the Finnish Exegetical Society 85 (Helsinki: Finnish Exegetical Society/Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2003), 5–6. Charles Talbert maintains that Paul is a monergist (saved by grace alone) and many Jews of his day were either legalists or synergists in his "Paul, Judaism, and the Revisionists," in *Getting "Saved": The Whole Story of Salvation in the New Testament*, ed. C. H. Talbert and Jason A. Whitlark (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011), 11–34. See the insightful comments on this issue by Oliver P. Rafferty, SJ, in *Justification: Five Views*, ed. James

reading of the polemic in Galatians. It is specifically the *Gentile* attempt to observe the works of the Mosaic Law that Paul is seeking to discourage. Good works or a life according to God's standards in the Torah is still expected, as can be seen from the list of the fruits of the Spirit at the end of Galatians 5 and Paul's practical counsel at the beginning of chapter 6. This new reading (i.e., the obedience of faith) comes closer to the Catholic understanding of the role of faith and works in the life of a Christian.[8]

Fig. 12: Three menorahs, Corinth.

4. Another response to the traditional Lutheran reading of Galatians is the Torah-friendly position promoted by Mark Nanos. He asks, "What would motivate former pagan, tribal people in the middle of Asia Minor to start observing Mosaic Law?" He suggests that Paul himself kept Mosaic Law (despite 1 Cor 9:20-21) and that the letter is about Paul's opposition to the proselyte conversion to Judaism of his *Gentile* Christ followers (i.e., males undergoing the rite of circumcision). These Galatian, Gentile, Christ-believers were probably "righteous Gentiles" (God-fearers) associated with the local synagogue and influenced by Jewish teachers (i.e., Paul's "agitators, judaizers, opponents, troublemakers").[9]

K. Belby and Paul Rhodes Eddy (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2012), 262–64. The five views discussed in this volume are Traditional Reformed, Progressive Reformed, New Perspective, Deification (Finnish-Lutheran and Orthodox dialogue), and Roman Catholic.

[8] "Justification, acquittal, deification, Christology, and God's righteousness are inseparable in Paul's theology." Stephen Finlan, *The Apostle Paul and the Pauline Tradition* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2008), 106.

[9] Mark Nanos, "The Inter- and Intra-Jewish Political Context of Paul's Letter to the Galatians," in Mark Nanos, ed., *The Galatians Debate: Contemporary*

Besides the perspective of Paul, the Torah-observant Jew guiding the Torah-loving Gentile Christ-believers into a life "such as Torah describes," Nanos (following Bruce Winter) offers another explanation of the dynamic in the occasion of this letter. We know that a temple for the worship of the imperial household existed in Galatia. The *Res Gestae* of *Deeds of the Deified Augustus*, the first Roman emperor, were inscribed on the wall of this temple. The political approach to Paul's mission and gospel suggests that Christians in Galatia were worried about being asked to worship the Roman emperor. If they did not offer incense to the emperor's spirit when asked to do so, they could be imprisoned until a trial when they might be enslaved, banished, or executed. Should they return to paganism (Gal 4:9-10)? If they could be like the Jews, however, they would then be exempt from Roman officials' requests to worship the emperor.[10] This view has the advantage of explaining why Paul appeals to the marks of persecution on his own body (6:17). He was a law-observant Jew and still faced persecution for his faith. In the argument of the letter, according to this approach, Paul is reminding the Galatians of his own gospel and example. He is saying, "I have followed this gospel and my Lord wherever he has led me. I follow the crucified Christ, who lives in me. He is the promised seed of Abraham. I've suffered for him and will continue to do so. You should, too, now that you are no longer under the elemental powers of the world!"[11]

Issues in Rhetorical and Historical Interpretation (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2011), 396–407, here at 400.

[10] In support of this Roman tolerance to the Jews (limited to peaceful localities), Bruce W. Winter cites Dio Cassius *Roman Histories* 51.20.6–7 in his *Seek the Welfare of the City: Christians as Benefactors and Citizens*, First-Century Christians in the Graeco-Roman World (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994), 133–43; Mark Nanos also cites Josephus, *Antiquities* 14.185–267 (Julius Caesar's decree of tolerance to Jews in Asia) in his *The Irony of Galatians: Paul's Letter in First-Century Context* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002), 260, see also 163, 269; N. T. Wright cites Winter's view in his *Paul in Fresh Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005), 75–76.

[11] Dieter Mitternacht, "Foolish Galatians?—A Recipient-Oriented Assessment of Paul's Letter," in Nanos, *Galatians Debate*, 408–33, esp. 411. Mitternacht also qualifies Bruce Winter's mention of a formalized Roman charter of tolerance to the Jews, arguing that it was one of political delicacy in

Form and Function

We have looked at the occasion of the letter. Now we will examine its form and function. How did Paul deal with this situation? How does he address the situation as he sees it?

Unable to visit his readers, Paul writes a letter to the Galatians. What sort of letter is it? It is not a personal letter of recommendation like Philemon; the tone (excluding the *paraenesis*, 5:13–6:10) is defensive like Plato's letter of self-defense to the friends of Dion of Sicily (*Epistle* 7). Although Galatians contains the basic components of an early Christian letter (opening: Gal 1:1-2; body: 1:6–4:31; *paraenesis*: 5:13–6:10; closing: 6:18), it lacks a Pauline thanksgiving section (e.g., 1 Thess 1:2-10; 1 Cor 1:4-9; Phil 1:3-11) and is dominated with argumentation defending Paul's authority and reasserting his own teaching.[12] Whatever the controversy, Paul's authority is being challenged and the work of his ministry is about to be overturned.

Basic Features

What type of argumentation did Paul employ in addressing this crisis situation? Some view Galatians as deliberative rhetoric (Quintilian *Institutio Oratoria* 3.8.10-11). In this model, the speaker is seeking to reflect on the right course of action for the future and asking his audience to join him in their decision.[13] This view holds that Galatians 1–2

---

each locality. The phrase *religio licita*, or "permitted religion," that is sometimes used to describe the Roman Empire's view of Judaism, seems to originate with Tertullian, *Apology* 21.1.

[12] Nils Dahl views Galatians as a letter of irony (citing similar letters from Isocrates, Demosthenes, Cicero, 119ff.) and provides a noteworthy structural outline of Galatians (141–42) in his "Paul's Letter to the Galatians: Epistolary, Content, and Structure," in Nanos, *Galatians Debate*, 117–42.

[13] George A. Kennedy also criticizes H. D. Betz, who views Galatians as judicial/courtroom rhetoric and provides his own rationale for deliberative/symbouleutic rhetoric here in Kennedy, *NT Rhetorical Criticism* (1984), 144–52. Robert G. Hall supports Kennedy in his "The Rhetorical Outline for Galatians: A Reconsideration," in Nanos, *Galatians Debate*, 29–38. Joop Smit sees the *general* exhortation of Galatians 5:13–6:10 (deliberative rhetoric?) as not belonging to the original letter but as a later Pauline addition, in his "The Letter of Paul to the Galatians: A Deliberative Speech," in Nanos, *Galatians Debate*, 39–59.

are not "facts of the case" but support Paul's claim that his gospel was of divine origin (1:11-12). It also regards the exhortation (*parenaesis*) of 5:1–6:10 as strong supporting evidence of this symbouleutic rhetoric.

Some scholars view Galatians as *protreptic* rhetoric. It is related to *paraenetic* (exhortation) and deliberative rhetoric (already mentioned) but focuses on promoting a particular course of action, calling the audience to a *new* way of life. For example, Galatians 1:6-9 and other Pauline texts (e.g., Rom 2:16; 1 Cor 1:10-17; 13:4-7; 1 Tim 4:7b-10) resemble Justin Martyr's *Dialogue with Trypho*, where Justin tries to dissuade him from Platonism (3.1–6.2) and to persuade regarding Christianity (7.1–9.3), and also the so-called *Letter to Diognetus*, which intends to win converts and to introduce them to a new way of life.[14]

James D. Hester, with special attention to Galatians 1–2 and the peroration 6:11-18, argues for epideictic/demonstrative rhetoric. Paul in Galatians is increasing adherence to common values shared by him and the Galatians (1:11-12; 2:19-21) but placing blame on the position advocated by "the agitators, false brothers" (1:6-10; 2:3-5, 14).[15]

C. Joachim Classen, citing the sixteenth-century Lutheran theologian Philip Melanchthon, *De Rhetorica* 13, sees here a new genus of "the instructing kind" (*genus didacticum*), by which the apostle blames the Galatians who turned away from what he had taught them and outlines again for them the faith, showing that if they moved away from it, they would lapse into wrong views.[16]

We will focus, instead, on the position of Hans Dieter Betz that Paul was using the language of the Greco-Roman courtroom, judicial rhetoric.[17] This effective form of forensic persuasion was concerned with the justice of a wrongdoing committed in the past.

[14] See Elliott and Reasoner, *Documents and Images*, 69; David E. Aune, "Protreptic Literature," in Aune, *Literature and Rhetoric*, 385.

[15] Hester, "Epideictic Rhetoric and Persona in Galatians 1 and 2," in Nanos, *Galatians Debate*, 181–96 (changing his earlier forensic views, see our note 13).

[16] "Paul's Epistles and Ancient Greek and Roman Rhetoric," Nanos, *Galatians Debate*, 101–4. R. Dean Anderson after his rhetorical analysis of Galatians favors the image of Paul as a philosopher whose pupils have departed from his teachings, then as a defendant on trial, a prosecutor in a court, or a politician in an assembly, *Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Paul*, rev. ed. (Leuven: Peeters, 1999), 189.

[17] "The Literary Composition and Function of Paul's Letter to the Galatians," Nanos, *Galatians Debate*, 3–28; *Galatians: A Commentary on Paul's*

Rules for this courtroom argumentation were well known in Paul's time. Both Jews and Gentiles of the Hellenistic period were taught in grammar school the textbooks of Aristotle and Cicero on persuasion (rhetoric) and public discourse. Works on rhetoric by Aristotle in the fourth century and Cicero in the first century BCE were established classics by the time of Paul's letter to the Galatians.

Rhetoric in the Greco-Roman World

One very well-known mode of rhetoric is the apology, or defense, which Plato narrates in his "Apology." In the city court of Athens, Socrates is accused by certain officials of corrupting the youth and mocking the traditional leaders and gods of Athens. In response to the indictment, Socrates makes a brilliant reply, but he is eventually sentenced to die by the council of Athens. Another is the work of the fourth-century BCE orator, Isocrates, called *Antidosis*, an apology or defense for the course of his life. The letter of Demosthenes, *Concerning His Own Restoration* (*Epistle* 2), is alleged to be written in his exile (323 BCE) to the Council and the Assembly of Athens in defense of his life and his return home.[18] Cicero in his *Brutus* (46 BCE) defends his own style of oratory before his critics using both historical and autobiographical arguments. This model of rhetorical communication can include biting critique of one's opponents, such as we find here in Galatians. Some scholars view Galatians as a letter in this mode

---

Letter to the Galatians, second ed., Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1984); "In Defense of the Spirit," *Aspects of Religious Propaganda*, 99–114 (cited earlier). We agree with his critics that the *paraenesis* of Galatians 5:13–6:10 presents problems for Betz's theory and have also nuanced our presentation with insights from Mark Nanos, Nils Dahl, and James Hester (as noted in the text).

[18] Of all the letters attributed to Plato, the *Seventh Letter* is most widely recognized as authentic, see R. G. Bury, prefatory note to "Epistle VII" in *Plato IX*, LCL (1929): 463–75. On Isocrates' *Antidosis*, and Plato's *Epistle* 7, see H. D. Betz, "The Literary Composition and Function of Paul's Letter to the Galatians" *NTS* 21 (1975), 354–55. Jonathan A. Goldstein regards Demosthenes' letters as authentic apologetic letters that were addressed to the Athenian assembly and asserts that "whether the letters had a spurious origin as propaganda or as rhetorical fictions, the aim of the author would be to present a defense of Demosthenes' career, a simulated self-defense" in his, *The Letters of Demosthenes* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), 93.

of rhetoric, offering an impassioned defense for Paul's initial visit to Galatia and the gospel that he delivered.

A close analogy to Galatians as an apologetic letter is Plato's letter of self-defense to the friends of Dion (Plato's *Epistle* 7), which we mentioned earlier. Dion was a former student of Plato, while Dionysius was the ruler of Syracuse. Plato had served as tutor and advisor to both Dion and Dionysius. The artificial courtroom consists of the following situation. The friends of the deceased Dion have questioned Plato's competence and effectiveness as a result of this civil unrest. Plato defends himself and gives an account of his life and experiences with both Dion and Dionysius. In this autobiographical work, Plato seeks to defend his position and the credibility of his contribution to Athens and to the human quest for truth with well-formulated arguments. In Paul's argument to church members of Galatia, Paul, like Plato, seeks to establish the credibility of his conduct and message so that it is beyond any doubt.

An Outline of Galatians

Now let us look at the structure and rhetorical arrangement of Galatians. As in Cicero's *Brutus* and Plato's *Epistle* 7 to friends, there is a structure in the epistolary format of Galatians that provides a platform upon which Paul can argue for his gospel. Who is the defendant in the case? Paul. Who are the accusers? The Judaizers or Influencers (Nanos), also known as "the teachers" or "the agitators." Who is the jury? The Galatians, before whom the letter is read after it is delivered to Galatia. The Galatians are Gentiles, most of whom were righteous Gentiles (or God-fearers who attended synagogues) before following Christ under Paul's ministry, still having some connection with the synagogues in Galatia (according to Mark Nanos).

What is the core of Paul's defense speech? It is that the Gentile Christ-followers are already full members in God's family and should not undergo the rite of proselyte conversion (i.e., circumcision). Let us now look at the rhetorical arrangement of Galatians to see how Paul unfolds his argument.[19]

[19] This outline of Galatians is adapted from Betz, *Galatians*. Minor changes in 1:11–2:14 are from J. D. Hester, "The Rhetorical Structure of Galatians 1:1–2:14, *JBL* 103, no. 2 (1984): 223–33 (who favored forensic rhetoric here).

The Rhetorical Structure of Galatians

I.	Epistolary prescript	1:1-5
	A. Senders and addressees	1:1-2
	B. Salutation	1:3-4
	C. Benediction	1:5
II.	Introduction to the case (*exordium*)	1:6-10
	A. Statement of the cause of letter	1:6-7
	B. Issuing of a double curse	1:8-9
	C. Transition	1:10
II.	Statement of facts (*narratio*)[20]	1:11–2:14
	A. Thesis to be demonstrated	1:11-12
	B. Transition	1:13-14
	C. Part 1: Paul's call/conversion, visit to Jerusalem and ministry in Asia Minor	1:15-24
	D. Part 2: Paul's second visit to Jerusalem	2:1-10
	E. Conflict at Antioch[21]	2:11-14
IV.	Summary of situation (*propositio*)	2:15-21
	A. Point of Agreement: justification by faith	2:15-16
	B. Point of Disagreement: its consequence for Gentile Christians	2:17-18
	C. The exposition of thesis[22]	2:19-20

[20] Kennedy does not regard 1:11–2:14 as statement of facts but as part of the confirmatio, 1:11–5:1, the great theological argument of the letter, *NT Rhetorical Criticism* (1984), 148–50, but Smit retains 1:13-21 as the narratio, making 3:1–4:11 the confirmatio, Nanos, *Galatians Debate*, 47–48. Perhaps in a way analogous to Galatians 1:15–2:14, the Roman orator Cicero defends his own style of oratory before his critics using both historical and autobiographical arguments in his speech *Brutus*. This model of rhetorical communication can include biting critique of one's opponents, such as we find here in Galatians (Cicero *Brutus*, *Orator*, vol. 5, LCL, no. 342; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1939).

[21] According to Paula Fredricksen, with "too many Gentiles, too few Jews, and no End in sight" (p. 258), Paul came to see that the restoration of Israel awaited his work among the Gentiles bringing the donation and themselves as an acceptable sacrifice to Jerusalem, but for Paul his work could only be accomplished if the Gentile Christ-followers remained Gentiles. See "Judaism, Circumcision, and Apocalyptic Hope," in Nanos, *Galatians Debate*, 255–60.

[22] Michael J. Gorman sees justification and (metaphorical) crucifixion here as connected aspects of the same reality. Galatians 2:19-20 "show why justification

	D. The refutation of an accusation	2:21
V.	Main Argument (*probatio*)	3:1–4:31
	A. Indisputable evidence	3:1-5
	B. Argument from Scripture[23]	3:6-14
	C. Argument from human experience of covenants[24]	3:15-18
	D. The true function of the Law for Gentile Christians	3:19-25
	E. The apocalyptic change in Christ: All God's children are equal and free from Torah's demands as well as the elemental powers of paganism[25]	3:26–4:11
	F. Personal Appeal	4:12-20
	G. Concluding Scripture Proof: Allegory of Slavery at Sinai and Freedom on Zion	4:21-31

---

by works of the law would render the cross null, void, superfluous. It is because justification is by participation in the cross—by co-crucifixion." *Inhabiting the Cruciform God*, 64.

[23] According to Richard B. Hays, Paul reads these Scriptures "in light of a central conviction that he and his readers are those upon whom the ends of the ages have come. They are God's eschatological people who, in receiving the grace of God through Jesus Christ, become a living sign to the meaning of God's word in Scripture," in his *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 121.

[24] See the following articles by Bruce Longenecker, Jason Maston, and Martinus C. de Boer in *JSPL* 2, no. 2 (Fall 2012): 65–114, that debate the thorny issue of either *continuity* and salvation-history (e.g., Israel's story now includes Gentiles; Longenecker, et al.) or apocalyptic *discontinuity* occasioned by the Christ event (e.g., Israel's story completely reworked; J. L. Martyn, M. C. de Boer).

[25] Illustrating apocalyptic discontinuity, we cite J. L. Martyn: "Religious and ethnic differentiations and that which underlies them—the Law—are identified in effect as 'the old things' that have now 'passed away,' giving place to the new creation (2 Cor 5:17)," *Galatians*, AB 33A (New York: Doubleday, 1997), 383. In dialogue with Jewish scholar Daniel Boyarin, Martyn concedes that these thoughts apply only to "those who are 'in Christ.' It is not a program of cultural criticism . . . not the genuine parent of any imperialistic, coercive, politico-cultural system—declaring the end of the Jewish people (see, e.g., Rom 9:4-5)," 382 n. 264.

VI.	Ethical exhortations[26] (*exhortatio*)	5:1–6:10
	A. Proselyte conversion of the Gentile Christians would be a mistake	5:1-12
	B. A corruption by the flesh	5:13-24
	C. Recommendations in the form of maxims (or ethical guidance)	5:25–6:10
VII.	Pathos in Final Appeal (*conclusio*)	6:11-18
	A. The signature	6:11
	B. The recapitulation (or summary of argument with emotional appeal to Paul's own suffering on behalf of the gospel	6:12-17
	C. Final benediction	6:18

The Prescript (1:1-5). The epistolary structure of Galatians provides an opportunity for Paul to signal what his whole letter concerns in its prescript. The function of the prescript is echoed by the letter's conclusion in 6:11-18. There Paul also includes the rhetorical devices of restating his argument (6:12-14) and evoking pathos with an emotional appeal (6:17).

The Exordium (1:6-10). The body of the letter coincides with most of the components of judicial rhetoric. Paul's opening statements about the problem at Galatia (1:6-10) constitute the exordium or introduction to the case. Mention of one's adversaries and the seriousness of the case (including threats) is typical of judicial rhetoric. A smooth transition often occurs from the exordium to the narratio and this provides some rationale for a division between v. 10 and v. 11.

The Narratio (1:11–2:14). In the narratio, Paul states his thesis that his gospel came not from some human source but through a revelation of Jesus Christ (vv. 11–12). Since Paul's life in Judaism and his activity as persecutor of the church (vv. 13–14) are not under question,

[26] Smit regards 5:13–6:10 as not belonging to part of the original letter (although a later Pauline addition), in Nanos, *Galatians Debate*, 48, 58f. This *paraenetic* section has been argued to favor deliberative rhetoric, Kennedy, *NT Rhetorical Criticism* (1984), 145. According to Nils Dahl, it is difficult to make a clear distinction between them, in Nanos, *Galatians Debate*, 137. Stanley K. Stowers, however, regards this material as protreptic rhetoric which seeks to exhort an audience to adopt a new way of life; see discussion and examples in Elliot and Reasoner, *Documents and Images*, 69–73.

they serve as a transition to the actual facts of the case (1:15–2:10). The account of Paul's birth, conversion/call, and apostolic ministry (1:15–2:10) serves a number of functions: (a) it provides a preceding history that led to the present situation and (b) it substantiates the thesis statement in 1:11-12. Galatians 2:11-14 concludes the narratio and prepares for the propositio.

The Propositio (2:15-21). Paul's statements in Galatians 2:15-21 function adequately as the propositio, which generally occurs between the narratio (1:11–2:14) and the probatio (3:1–4:3). Along with summarized expositions that are to be elaborated later (2:19-21), the propositio contains points of argument (2:15-16) and agreement (2:17-18) shared between the defendant and accusers.

The Probatio (3:1–4:31). Most of Paul's doctrinal or foundational teaching comes in the probatio. This is the most decisive section because in it the main arguments of the case are spelled out for the Galatians. The letter's success or failure at its first hearing depends on the reception its audience gives to the probatio.

Paul's appeal is reinforced by: (1) his use of apostrophe or expression of indignation;[27] (2) his citation of passages from Deuteronomy and Habakkuk (Gal 3); (3) an example from human practice (3:15-18; with 3:19-25, a short excursus on the law's function); (4) reminders of their favored status as Christians (3:26–4:11); (5) a personal appeal to friendship (4:12-20); and (6) an allegorical argument from Scripture (4:21-31).

The Exhortatio (5:1–6:10). The ethical exhortation or parenesis (5:1–6:10) is a distinctive element of Paul's argumentation, although it has a similar function as deliberative persuasion in rhetorical handbooks. Paraenesis, as we know, was used a great deal in philosophical dialogues and it forms part of Paul's argument in Galatians. It can be argued that Galatians 5:1, 13, 25 repeat the conclusion of Paul's probatio in 4:31 (which alludes to arguments in 3:9, 13-14, 24, 29; 4:7) and contain warnings against Gentile adherence to the Jewish Influencers (5:1-12) and corruption by the flesh (5:16-21). Since Christ became

[27] See *Rhetorica Ad Herrenium* 4.15.22 and Cicero, *De Inventione* 1.53 (indignatio). Nils Dahl finds similar statements of ironic rebuke, retorts, and expressions of distress in Greco-Roman letters, Nanos, *Galatians Debate*, 117–30.

cursed for us (3:13-14) and fulfilled the law's demands, he has inaugurated a new reality marked by neighborly love and burden bearing (5:13-14; 6:2), which is sufficient for all believers.[28]

The Conclusio. A final defensive weapon is the conclusio. This part of the letter culminates and dramatically intensifies Paul's argument. In the exordium (1:8-9) Paul invokes a curse for those Gentile Christ-followers who follow the works of the law and in the conclusio (6:16) he invokes a blessing on those who follow the "rule" of freedom (cf. 5:1). This conditional curse gives Galatians a magical potency over the reader. Parallels to the binding force of the curse as a performative function of language can be found in both the Jewish liturgical piece known as the Eighteen Benedictions and the oath of Hippocrates.[29]

In this letter, Paul confronts the Galatians with a choice between (a) the gospel he received from God and originally delivered to the Galatians or (b) the teaching of the "agitators" who came after Paul left.

The letter itself serves as the carrier of the curse or the letter will automatically enact the "judgment." The readers who are both the jury in the trial of Paul and defendants in the collective, human predicament before God will either be acquitted and freed or will be sent to a final judgment. Paul uses some apocalyptic imagery and asks the Galatians why they would want to submit to proselyte conversion or the elemental powers under which they had been enslaved. The letter carries the curse or will automatically enact the "judgment."

Situation

Let us summarize the situation at Galatia and how Paul sought to address it. First, the Galatians as recipients of Paul's gospel without undergoing the rite of proselyte conversion became a people of the

[28] Michael K. W. Suh, "'It Has Been Brought to Completion': Lev 19:8 as Christological Witness in Gal 5:14," *JSPL* 2, no. 2 (Fall 2012): 115–32, esp. 132.

[29] On the Eighteen Benedictions or *shemoneh 'esre*, see Barrett, *NT Background*, 162; William W. Simpson, *Jewish Prayer and Worship* (Naperville, IL: SCM, 1965), 62–63; "Amida," *DJBP*, 30–31; for a translation of Hippocrates' oath, *Jusj.* 1, see online from Michael North, *Hippocratic Oath* (National Library of Medicine, 2002), http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.01.0252.

Spirit liberated from the evil world (4:3-6).[30] They became recipients of God's Spirit and salvation simply by being in Christ, who came as God's agent of salvation. Second, the Galatians may have experienced some transgression in their midst (6:1) related to problems with the "flesh" (5:13, 15, 26), probably concerning some misconduct or immorality. These problems constitute an abuse or exploitation of their Christian freedom. Deficiencies in the Christian experience of the Galatians soon became evident to many.

Third, the position of Paul's opponents, "the agitators," became influential. From the perspective of these influencers, people who lived apart from the Jewish law and customs were regarded as lawless sinners. For these zealous influencers (cf. Phineas, Num 25:6-15), immorality was a natural consequence of not observing the law. As they saw it, Paul's gospel was lawless and made Christ a "servant of sin" (2:17, 21). The Galatians needed therefore to accept the Jewish law and observe the rite of circumcision in order to be of the Sinai covenant and enjoy all the securities that come with it.[31]

The political approach to Paul's mission and gospel suggests that Gentile Christians in Galatia were also worried about being compelled to worship the Roman emperor. If they did not offer incense to the emperor's genius (as they had done as pagans), they could be imprisoned until a trial when they might be enslaved, banished, or executed. Should they return to paganism (Gal 4:9-10)? If they could be like the Jews, however, they would then be exempt from Roman officials' requests to worship the emperor (see Roman tolerance to Jews in Dio Cassius *Rom. Hist.* 51.20.6-7; Josephus *Antiquities* 14.185–267).

The following is an excerpt from a reconstruction of what the opponents' sermons might have been like:

> Listen now! It all began with Abraham. Looking beyond the fascinating movement of the heavenly bodies, he was the first to discern that there is but one God. Because of that perception, he turned

[30] See Roy E. Ciampa, "Abraham and Empire in Galatians," *Perspectives on Our Father Abraham: Essays in Honor of Marvin R. Wilson* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010), 153–68.

[31] Robert Jewett even sees zealot pressure as further motivation for these influencers to avert any suspicion that they were in communion with *lawless* Gentiles, "The Agitators and the Galatian Congregation," Nanos, *Galatians Debate*, 340–41.

> from the service of dumb idols to the worship of that true God. Therefore, God made him the father of our great nation Israel. But that was only the beginning, for God blessed Abraham in a way that is coming to its fulfillment only now in the messianic age. Speaking through a glorious angel, God said to Abraham:
>
> In you shall all nations of the world be blessed, for I shall multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven. Come outside, and look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able. So shall your descendants be, for I speak this blessing to you and to your descendants (cf. Gen 12:3; 15:5; 17:4; 18:18).
>
> What is the meaning of this blessing that God gave to Abraham? Pay attention to these things: Abraham was the first proselyte. As we have said, he discerned the one true God and turned to him. God's blessing took the form, therefore, of an unshakable covenant with Abraham, and God defined the covenant as the commandment of circumcision. He also revealed to Abraham the heavenly calendar, so that in his own lifetime our father was obedient to the Law, not only keeping the commandment of circumcision, but also observing the holy feasts on the correct days. Later, when God handed down the Law on tablets of stone at Sinai, he spoke once again by the mouths of his glorious angels, for they passed the Law through the hand of the mediator, Moses (Gal 3:19). And now the Messiah has come, confirming for eternity God's blessed Law, revealed to Abraham and spoken through Moses.[32]

If you were a new follower of Jesus, could the preceding sermon be persuasive? It is very possible that something like the sermon quoted above is what Paul's rivals were telling the church members of Galatia.

Paul's apologetic response can be traced in the following summary. Paul reminds the Galatians, before he begins his proofs, that he was appointed by Christ himself to preach this gospel from God to the nations without requiring them to undergo proselyte conversion.

The Galatians' initial response of faith in Christ remains sufficient. By responding to Paul's gospel, they have become heirs of God's salvation and its benefits without proselyte conversion. The position of Paul's opponents, the influencers, cannot refute the effectiveness and truth of Paul's gospel and the gift of the Holy Spirit that the Galatians have experienced. The Mosaic Law was originally meant to be a tem-

[32] Martyn, *Galatians*, 303.

porary measure until the promised seed of Abraham should arrive and bring God's promised blessing—now fulfilled by the gift of the Spirit which is activated by baptism in the name of Christ. For Gentiles to submit to Torah in order to maintain membership in God's family is inconsistent, according to Paul's argument, with the way God promised and has already begun to spread blessing to the nations as humanity nears the end of the age.

Note the key role that the Holy Spirit has in Paul's address to the Galatians. Susan Eastman writes regarding Galatians: "A closer look at the Spirit's activities will reveal both its role as the glue that holds together the cosmic and personal dimensions of the new relational matrix, which Paul and his converts share 'in Christ,' and its related role in bringing the Galatians from their genesis to their future completion in the faith."[33]

Destination and Date

Before concluding this chapter, the related problems of the book's destination and date need to be examined. Although it is clear that the addressees of the letter are "Galatians," their specific identity is uncertain. The question of date is also related to this first question of destination.

Two theories have dominated the discussion of the letter's precise destination and date. The decision one makes on these theories does have exegetical implications for how the letter is understood.

The first theory is that Galatians was written to the inhabitants of North Galatia (the Galatai, Celtic people who had lived in the northern part of Asia Minor since the third century BCE).[34] When this theory

[33] Susan Eastman, *Recovering Paul's Mother Tongue: Language and Theology in Galatians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007), 169. See also David J. Lull, *The Spirit in Galatia: Paul's Interpretation of Pneuma as Divine Power*, SBLDS 49 (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1980).

[34] The ethnic region of Galatia is named after the *Galatai*, migrating tribes from Gaul who eventually settled in northern Phrygia, see W. Tarn and G. Griffith, *Hellenistic Civilization* (London: Arnold Press, 1952), 14, and M. Austin, *The Hellenistic World from Alexander to the Roman Conquest* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 239–40. See also Ben Witherington, *Grace in Galatia: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Galatians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 2–13.

is accepted, the letter's date is assigned to Paul's three-month stay in Ephesus (Acts 19:8, 10), around 53 or 54 CE. The second theory is that the letter was written to those from South Galatia (the Roman province of Galatia, so named since the late first century BCE), soon after Paul's so-called first missionary journey ended, around 48 or 49 CE. In this second theory, Paul's letter to the Galatians would have been his first letter, probably written from Antioch.[35]

Let us look at some of the key issues involved in these two theories. First is the question of whether Paul uses the older, ethnic name of "Galatia" (where the cities of Lystra and Iconium were located), which included the southern regions of Asia Minor where Paul traveled on his first missionary journey (Acts 13:13). Second is the question of whether Galatians 2 refers to the Jerusalem Conference described in Acts 15.

It is safe to assume that both "Galatia" and Galatians refer to the people of what we now call northern Asia Minor. Paul hardly ever uses Roman nomenclature for its empire's provinces.[36] Galatians 1 and the book of Acts do not provide an exhaustive treatment of Paul's

[35] An early argument for the South Galatian theory is found in William M. Ramsay, *A Historical Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1900). For the classic statement of the North Galatian theory, see J. B. Lightfoot, *The Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians*, 10th ed. (London: Macmillan, 1890). Some have combined the South Galatian theory with the later date of 53–54 CE, favored by North Galatian advocates—see, e.g., R. H. Fuller, *Critical Introduction to the New Testament* (London: Gerald Duckworth, 1966), 23–26. Betz reminds us that "the letter provides no clues as to its place of origin. The "Marcionite" prologues (see Harnack, *Marcion*, 1924: 127–28) state that it was sent from Ephesus, but the *subscriptio* contained in some manuscripts of Galatians names Rome as the place from which it was sent. Scholars have argued in favor of Ephesus, Macedonia, and Corinth," in "Galatians, Epistle to the," *AYBD* 2, no. 872; *idem*, *Galatians*, 12. For further discussion, see Moises Silva, *Interpreting Galatians: Explorations in Exegetical Method* (1996; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2001), 129–39; and Martyn, *Galatians*, 15–20.

[36] It must be qualified that Paul, on certain occasions, does employ Roman provincial designations such as Macedonia for the ethnic region of Thrace. But this appears to be an "exception to the rule" in the Pauline corpus. Paul certainly uses ethnic names for geographical areas, such as Achaia and Asia (1 Cor 16:5, 15, 19).

journeys, and it is likely that Paul made it up to the northern part of what we now call Turkey.[37]

Some have argued that Paul's account of a church conference in which he met with Cephas and others reputed to be pillars in Jerusalem is different from the Jerusalem conference described in Acts 15. Paul's omission in Galatians of the apostolic decrees (Acts 15:21) may have been due to either his own difficulties with these stipulations or the fact that they were introduced after the conference when Paul made his final commitment to go to the Gentiles. There are those who claim that Galatians 2 and Acts 15 could refer to the same meeting that occurred after Paul's first missionary journey. Note that in both accounts Barnabas and Paul are present. The occasion of both meetings seems to be because of the urgent question of requiring circumcision for the Gentile proselyte by certain Jewish influencers.[38] Mention is also made in both accounts to remember the poor. Finally, James and Peter are mentioned in both accounts. The differences between Galatians 2 and Acts 15 concern more specific points. In Galatians, Paul was prompted to go to Jerusalem by a special revelation, and a private meeting is described. In Acts 15, Paul and Barnabas are sent by the Antioch church, and the meeting appears to be open to church leaders and delegates.[39]

It has also been suggested that Paul wrote Galatians after his second visit to North Galatia and that evidence for this possibility appears in

[37] We also cannot be certain about the complete itinerary of Paul's so-called first missionary journey (Acts 13–14). Most of the locations are not mentioned by Paul in his letters (although it is unlikely that his letters present an exhaustive account!). The Acts narrative is also written like a model missionary journey for late first-century Christians with a model sermon on natural theology (14:15-17) and the example of appointing presbyters (14:23). See Haenchen, *Acts*, 429–34; and J. Bradley Chance, *Acts*, Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2007), 250–51.

[38] Philip F. Esler sees a major decision affirmed in Jerusalem concerning the halakhic status and, thus, obligations of Gentile members of the movement (2:1-10). Paul later sees the Jerusalem apostles as reneging on their agreement with him to guarantee eucharistic table fellowship between Jews and Gentiles in the Diaspora without requiring proselyte conversion, "Making and Breaking an Agreement Mediterranean Style: A New Reading of Galatians 2:1-14," Nanos, *Galatians Debate*, 261–62, 267–81.

[39] Witherington, *Grace in Galatia*, 13–20, and Witherington, *Acts*, 440–49. For more discussion on Galatians 1–2 and Acts, see "A Chronology of Paul's Life" in our chapter 2, pp. 52–58.

the letter itself. The Greek phrase in Galatians 4:13, *to proteron*, could be understood as the former of two visits. The exclamation about how the Galatians "so quickly deserted" him could be best understood if Paul wrote from Ephesus shortly after visiting them (Gal 1:6; Acts 18:23; 19:1).

The content of Galatians supports the later dating. If Galatians were written in 53–54 CE, it would be chronologically closer to 2 Corinthians and thus give evidence of theological similarities with 2 Corinthians, which are in fact quite evident. Galatians is closer theologically to Romans than to 1 Thessalonians with its imminent eschatology.[40] Advocates for the early date would have to place the composition of Galatians before 1 Thessalonians and would then have the very difficult challenge of explaining the different theological emphases in these two letters, not all of which can be explained by differences in their audience's occasions.

Summary

In this chapter we saw that Paul probably wrote his letter from Ephesus to Christians of North Galatia around 53–54 CE. It was written in response to a crisis in the Galatian churches that Paul had founded. Many in these churches founded by Paul assumed that they as Gentiles needed to observe Mosaic Law to fully participate in the blessings of salvation promised to Israel and to live holy lives in the morally chaotic world of the first-century Roman Empire. Paul writes against his opponents' arguments in a manner similar to that of the courtroom rhetoric of Cicero. He is both defending himself and accusing his opponents of false or unreal constructions of God's plan for the nations.

The letter remains in the Pauline collection of the Christian canon as an impassioned appeal for the nations' participation in the blessings promised through Abraham without submission to the Mosaic Law. The situation of the letter presupposes the special appeal of the Torah to some Christians and to its boundary-marking function in relation to Judaism.[41] All Christians who read it today are forced, by the rhetoric

[40] In Galatians and Romans, we have similar teaching on justification, the promise to Abraham, sonship, union with Christ, and walking in the Spirit. In 2 Corinthians, Paul defends himself against similar attacks as in Galatians (Gal 1:6, 10; 2:4; with 2 Cor 11:4; 5:11; 11:26).

[41] James D. G. Dunn discusses these boundary markers in "The Incident at Antioch (Gal 2:11-18)" Nanos, *Galatians Debate*, 207–14.

of the letter, to come to a position regarding the permanence and value of the central event of the Old Testament—God's revelation at Mt. Sinai and formal constitution of his people there.[42]

[42] For further research, see the following commentaries and studies: B. H. Brinsmead, *Galatians: Dialogical Response to Opponents*, SBLDS 65 (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1982); F. F. Bruce, *Commentary on Galatians*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1982) and "Galatian Problems: North or South Galatians?" *BJRL* 52 (1969/70): 243–46; E. D. Burton, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle of Paul to the Galatians*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1921); C. H. Cosgrove, *The Cross and the Spirit: A Study in the Argument and Theology of Galatians* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1989); D. Guthrie, *Galatians*, NCB (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1969); G. Howard, *Paul: Crisis in Galatia, A Study in Early Christian Theology*, SNTSMS 35, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990). R. Jewett, "The Agitators and the Galatian Congregation," in Nanos, *Galatians Debate*, 334–47; David John Lull, *The Spirit in Galatia: Paul's Interpretation of Pneuma as Divine Power*, SBLDS 49 (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1980); Martyn, *Galatians*; Frank J. Matera, *Galatians*, Sacra Pagina (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1992); James D. G. Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, BNTC (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1993); Sam K. Williams, *Galatians* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1997); Richard B. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ: The Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1–4:11*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002); Susan Eastman, *Recovering Paul's Mother Tongue* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007); Michael Bachmann, *Anti-Judaism in Galatians? Exegetical Studies on a Polemical Letter and on Paul's Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009); Scott Schauf, "Galatians 2.20 in Context," *NTS* 52 (2006): 86–101.

CHAPTER 7

The Letters to the Colossians and Ephesians

Introduction

Colossians and Ephesians are literary siblings. Almost one-third of the former book appears in the latter, and approximately one-half of the sentences in the latter book include language from the former.[1] Although Colossians and Ephesians are often classed with Philippians and Philemon as Paul's Prison Epistles, questions about their authorship raise some doubts about this classification. First we will look at Colossians, then Ephesians, noting the questions of authorship, historical setting, literary characteristics, genre, and structure.

Colossians

In 1961 at the World Council of Churches Assembly at New Delhi, Joseph Sittler caused an international sensation with his lecture on "The Cosmic Christ." Using Colossians 1:15-20, he asserted that Christian salvation is found throughout the entire world, even outside of Christianity, because both nature and grace are one in Christ.[2] Reactions to Sittler's Christocentric inclusivism were mixed; nevertheless, it aroused interest in this hymn of the cosmic Christ in Colossians, as well as in the letter as a whole.

[1] Roetzel, *Letters of Paul*, 148. See esp. T. Abbott, *Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1897), xxiii–xxiv; N. Perrin and D. Duling, *The New Testament: An Introduction*, 2nd ed. (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1982), 218–20; Jerry L. Sumney, *Colossians*, NTL (WJK, 2008), 1–9; Michael F. Bird, *Colossians, Philemon*, NCCS 12 (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2009), 3–8; Lynn H. Cohick, *Ephesians*, NCCS 10 (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2010).

[2] Statement from: Sampley, et al., *Eph, Col*, 41. See also Joseph Sittler, *The Case of the Earth*, Facets (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004).

Before we can understand the intense, theological battle regarding the scope of Christ's salvation envisioned in the Colossians hymn, we must understand some preliminary skirmishes on the battlefield we call the letter of Colossians. This battlefield has sites where skirmishes routinely break out over such questions as: Who wrote Colossians? Against whom was the letter written? What kind of letter or literary type is it? We must begin with these preliminary battles.

Authorship

Of the disputed Pauline letters, Colossians, like 2 Thessalonians, makes a strong claim to be genuine. But since the mid-nineteenth century, doubts about the authenticity of Colossians have been voiced.[3] Both the claims and counterclaims will be presented.

Arguments Supporting Authenticity. There is solid external and noteworthy internal evidence for maintaining that the apostle Paul was the author. Colossians is alluded to in the writings of Ignatius (Ign *Eph* 10.3 / Col 1:23) and Justin Martyr *(Dialogues* 85 / Col 1:15). Also, both Marcion and Origen regarded it as authentic. Internal similarities with Philemon also lend support for the authenticity of Colossians:

1. Both contain Timothy's name with Paul's in the opening greeting (Col 1:1; Phlm 1).
2. Greetings are sent in both letters from Aristarchus, Mark, Epaphras, Luke, and Demas, who are clearly with Paul at the time (Col 4:10-14; Phlm 23, 24).
3. In Philemon 2, Archippus is called "fellow soldier," and in Colossians 4:17 he is directed to fulfill his ministry.
4. Onesimus, the slave about whom Paul writes to Philemon, is mentioned in Colossians 4:4 as being sent along with Tychicus and is described as "one of you."

[3] The following work first raised the issue: E. Mayerhoff, *Der Brief an die Colosser* (Berlin, 1838). See also E. Lohse, *Colossians and Philemon*, Hermeneia, trans. W. Poehlmann and R. Karris (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971); Perrin and Duling, *NT Intro*, 209–12; Sampley, et al., *Eph, Col*, 69–71 ; Kümmel, *Introduction*, 340–46, Raymond F. Collins, *The Letters That Paul Did Not Write*, GNS (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1988), 171–208; Margaret Y. MacDonald, *Colossians and Ephesians*, SP 17 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2008), 6–9.

5. As in Philemon 9–10, 13, Paul identifies himself as a prisoner ("remember my chains," Col 4:18).

This point (5) and the other similarities with Philemon have also made it more defensible for interpreters to locate the letter's origin in some place where the apostle was known to be imprisoned— e.g., Ephesus (2 Cor 1:8-10; *Acts Paul*), Rome (Acts 28:16-31; Phil 1:13; 4:22), or possibly Caesarea (Acts 23:23–26:32).

Finally, there are some stylistic idiosyncrasies shared with Paul's other undisputed letters: (a) the construction of *kai* after *dio touto* ("for this reason also," Col 1:9; 1 Thess 2:13; 3:5; Rom 13:6), (b) *charizesthai* ("forgive," Col 2:13; 3:13; 2 Cor 2:7, 10; 12:13), (c) *en merei* ("with regard to," Col 2:16; 2 Cor 3:10; 9:3), and (d) "every good work" (Col 1:10; 2 Cor 9:8; Rom 2:7; 13:3; Phil 1:6).

Arguments against Authenticity. Despite the convincing claims for Pauline authorship, there is some evidence to counter it. First, Colossians has a distinctive vocabulary and style. Twenty-five words do not occur in Paul's other letters, and thirty-four are not found elsewhere in the New Testament. Synonyms are frequently coupled together (e.g., "praying and asking" 1:9; "holy and blameless" 1:22), and genitivally linked phrases seem to occur more frequently here and in Ephesians than in any other of Paul's letters (e.g., "of the mystery of God, of Christ," 2:2 cf. 2:12). The style is often cumbersome, wordy, and overloaded almost to obscurity with dependent clauses, participial and infinitive constructions, or substantives with *en* ("in"). For example, in the Greek both 1:9-20 and 2:9-15 are only one sentence each.[4]

A second line of inquiry regarding Pauline authorship, albeit an argument from silence, is the absence of concepts characteristic of Paul. Themes such as righteousness, justification, law, salvation, revelation, fellow Christians as "brethren" (apart from the letter greeting) are noticeably absent in Colossians. Paul's sense of urgency in his apostolic mission is also missing. No longer is the apostle driven to complete his work before time runs out. No longer does he write under the shadow of the world's denouement. The future dimension of salvation almost disappears (e.g., Col 1:13, 22; 2:12, 13).

[4] Kümmel, *Introduction*, 341. See also Mark Kiley, *Colossians as Pseudepigraphy*, The Biblical Seminar (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1986), 51–59.

A third category of observations highlighted by those who question the Pauline authorship of Colossians is composed of concepts apparently unique in the Pauline corpus and thus thought to represent a significant development after the completion of Paul's own writings. We will look at the following themes: Christology, apostleship, ministry, and baptism.

It has been argued by some that the Christology of Colossians 1:15-23 appears to be "higher"—more apt to say that Jesus is as divine as God the Father—than anything found earlier. In Colossians 1:15, Christ is "the image of the invisible God, the first born of all creation." No longer does Christ seem to reflect a likeness to which others can be conformed (e.g., Rom 8:29), but he is now seen as a true representation of God, making visible what heretofore was invisible. This "image of the invisible God" Christology of Colossians 1:15 is identical with the Christology of Hebrews 1:3a, though not emphasized in other letters of Paul.[5] Moreover, Christ is the goal of all creation (Col 1:16), whereas in 1 Corinthians 8:6 this title is only applied to God. In Colossians 1:18, Christ is the head of the body, where the "body" is a cosmic reality (1:18, 24; 2:19; 3:15), but in Romans 7:4; 12:5; and 1 Corinthians 12:12-31, it is a metaphorical way of expressing mutual interdependence of Christians in the local church. Christ as the "head" of the body was also never used in the earlier writings. In Colossians 2:6, moving toward early Christian orthodoxy, "Christ Jesus" is the subject of the authoritative tradition that the believer "receives" and in which he "lives" (Col 2:6). This seems to be a step beyond Paul's view of tradition (1 Cor 7:10; 11:23-26).[6]

Concerning the concept of apostleship in Colossians, we note also a development beyond the undisputed Pauline letters. Although Paul represents himself as the apostle to the Gentiles who shares in the sufferings of Christ, the apostle in Colossians gladly suffers for the sake of the readers (1:24). Through Paul's preaching and *suffering* he takes

[5] Note how it is assumed here that the Colossians hymn is different from what is considered to be the norm for Paul; then the view of the non-Pauline authorship of Colossians is used to support the claim that Paul has a low Christology. David Horrell writes that Paul "never refers to Jesus directly either as God or as God the Son (although there are some passages, open to various interpretations, where Jesus' divinity may be implied; e.g., Rom. 9.5; Phil 2.5-11; Col 1.15-20—though Colossians may not be by Paul himself)." *An Introduction to the Study of Paul*, 2nd ed. (London: T&T Clark, 2006), 64.

[6] Perrin and Duling, *NT lntro*, 211–12; Sumney, *Colossians*, 4–5.

the gospel to every creature (1:23). Here the suffering of the apostle complements the vicarious suffering of Christ. In 2 Corinthians, Paul scoffs at those who claim to be mature (3:1-4). In Colossians, Paul appears as the apostle to the nations, whose message given "in all wisdom" (1:28) serves to make everyone "perfect" (*teleios*) in Christ.[7]

Those disposed to view Colossians as written by someone other than Paul claim that in Colossians we do not find a charismatic view of ministry but a more institutionalized formulation of it.[8] Epaphras is a "faithful minister of Christ on our behalf" and Paul is also a "minister" involved in a "divine office" (1:7, 23, 25). But in the Corinthian correspondence, Paul refers to himself and others simply as "servants" of God or Christ (1 Cor 3:5; 2 Cor 6:4; 11:23). It must be noted, however, that Romans 16:1 also calls someone (Phoebe) a "minister." As in Paul's discussion of spiritual gifts in 1 Corinthians, the offices of apostle, prophet, and teacher could also be assumed here (12:28-29). Furthermore, Paul's consideration of his official relationship with the Corinthians and his claim to the office of apostle are integral parts of his correspondence with them (1 Cor 3:5-9; 15:9-11; 16:12; 2 Cor 11:5).

One last point is the distinct role of baptism. In Colossians 2:11 baptism is the Christian equivalent of Jewish circumcision; it is the formal sign of membership in the community. In the earlier letters circumcision is a Jewish rite now abandoned by Christians (Rom 2:25-29; 3:1, 30; 4:9-12), and baptism is a dynamic means of entry into a new and different life (Rom 6:3-11). The eschatological baptismal language of Romans is also missing from Colossians, though the description of baptism in Colossians is not contradictory to the ways baptism functions in Paul's argument of Romans 6:1-14.

Conclusions. The above linguistic and theological departures from the undisputed letters can be interpreted in a number of ways. It is possible that (a) changes occurred in Paul's thinking through the years, (b) new vocabulary and theology were used to address a new situation,

[7] Roetzel, *Letters*, 144f.

[8] Utilizing some of Max Weber's insights on the problems created by the death of a charismatic leader, Margaret Y. MacDonald shows the institutional challenges faced by the Pauline circle in the face of Paul's imprisonment and death in her *The Pauline Churches: A Socio-Historical Study of Institutionalization in the Pauline and Deutero-Pauline Writings*, MSSNTS 60 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988) and her *Colossians and Ephesians*.

(c) Paul employed a different secretary or amanuensis from the ones he had used in others of his letters whose authorship scholars do not question, or (d) a post-Pauline author is responsible for the work.

Among those disposed to view Colossians as a letter authored by someone after Paul, the departures from the undisputed letters are usually summarized as pointing toward emerging orthodoxy.[9] If a new secretary was employed, his/her influence was so dominant that it would be more appropriate to identify this secretary as the author.[10] Furthermore, just as each person has distinctive fingerprints and even a "voiceprint" that cannot be imitated by someone else, so each person also has a "language print."[11] For those ready to find different authors within the Pauline corpus, the "language print" of Colossians—and the similar letter of Ephesians—seems different from what scholars decided is the "language print" of the undisputed letters of Paul. The project of deciding who wrote these letters based on internal evidence alone, however, is suspect both in regard to its reliability and its utility for understanding the documents themselves.[12]

[9] See E. Käsemann, "Paul and Early Catholicism," in *idem*, *NT Questions Today*, trans. W. Montague (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), 236–51; I. H. Marshall, "'Early Catholicism' in the NT," in R. Longenecker, ed., *New Dimensions in NT Study* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1974); R. Kraft, "The Development of the Concept of 'Orthodoxy,'" in G. Hawthorne, ed., *Current Issues in Biblical and Patristic Interpretation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1975), 48–56; W. Bauer, *Orthdoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity*, trans. R. Kraft, et al. (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971). For current discussion of emerging orthodoxy see C. B. Puskas and C. M. Robbins, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 2nd ed. (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2011), 228–30, 243–55.

[10] On secretaries as recorders, editors, substitute authors, collaborators, and coauthors, see Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul the Letter-Writer* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1995), 6–19, and Charles H. Talbert, *Ephesians and Colossians*, Paidea (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 7–11.

[11] Sampley et al., *Eph, Col*, 69. Certain factors may limit the determination of a "voiceprint," e.g., the amount of linguistic data available (2 Thess, Col, Eph, Pastorals) and the influence of outside material upon the author's distinctive language and style (LXX Scripture).

[12] See "the crisis of historical meaning" in Bradley Hudson McLean, *Biblical Interpretation and Philosophical Hermeneutics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 1–98. See also the insightful survey of discussion in J. D. G. Dunn, "Pseudepigraphy," *DLNTD*, 977–84.

Because of the distinctive vocabulary, style, and theology, it is possible that Colossians was the work of a later disciple who sought to update the Pauline tradition for a new situation (i.e., Deutero-Pauline authorship). Since Ignatius was acquainted with it by the early second century, Colossians was written earlier, perhaps the late first century. With the full realization that this letter has some different ideological emphases and some different literary characteristics from Paul's undisputed letters, we find no problem in viewing this book as a full member of the collection of Paul's letters, as it was uniformly viewed from the second through eighteenth century. Since the letter alleges to arise out of Paul's ministry and worldview, and since it is impossible to make a definitive pronouncement on who wrote the letter, it is not inappropriate to call its author "Paul."

The City and the Church at Colossae[13]

Colossae was located in the Lycus river valley of Phrygia (western Asia Minor), east of Ephesus. It was near Laodicea and Hieropolis, where there were other churches (Col 4:13-17). From the third century BCE, Jews resided in the area (Josephus, *Antiq.* 12.3.1–3; Philo, *Legat.* 245; Cicero *Flac.* 28.68). It appears from the letter that the church of Colossae was comprised mainly of Gentiles. A pagan background seems to be presupposed (Col 1:21, 27; 2:13; 3:11) and only a few Pauline associates are identified as Jewish believers (4:10-11). We have no evidence that the apostle Paul ever visited the city. Epaphras, Paul's disciple, probably founded the church there (4:12).

The False Teachers

A major problem that occasioned the writing of Colossians was that of false teachers. They were propagating a way of life that was con-

[13] For further study, see C. E. Arnold, "Colossae," *AYBD* 1, 1089–90. Francis and Meeks, *Conflict at Colossae*; V. P. Furnish, "Colossians, Epistle to the" *AYBD* 1, 1090–96; Gunther, *Opponents*; P. T. O'Brien, *Colossians, Philemon*, WBC (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982), xxx–xli; M. J. Harris, *Colossians and Philemon*, EGGNT (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991); P. Pokorný, *Colossians: A Commentary*, trans. S. Schatzmann (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991); A. G. Patzia, *Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon*, NIBCNT (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991); Michael Trainor, "Colossae: The State of Forthcoming Excavations," *JSPL* 1, no. 1 (Spring 2011): 133–35.

trary to the author's own position and thus were viewed as a harmful influence. It is unclear to what extent these false teachers had already influenced the author's audience. Paul may be simply warning the Colossians of danger in the religious world of Colossae.

Their Philosophy. The false teachers' identity is much debated, but the letter does reveal something about their "philosophy" (2:8). Epicurean and Stoic philosophers are mentioned in Acts 17:18, and Josephus writes of Jewish groups (e.g., Pharisees, Essenes) as philosophies (*JW* 2.119; *Antiq* 18.11), but here it is used in a more pejorative sense as erroneous teaching.[14] This philosophy may not have been concerned so much with logical thought or speculation as with a revealed knowledge through which the meaning of the world was known. It was specifically concerned with the powers or "elemental spirits of the universe" (2:8; cf. Gal 4:3). The "worship of angels" (is it an objective genitive? Col 2:18) refers either to the reverence given to these "principalities and powers" (1:16; 2:15; *Jos. Asen.* 15:12) or participating in angelic worship (subjective genitive; *Apoc Abr* 17–18; *3 Enoch* 1:9-12; *Apoc Zeph* 8). By attaining a proper relationship with these cosmic powers, one could attain some mystical experience or divine fullness (*plērōma*). As possessors of this mystical experience, these opponents also claimed special "visions" (2:18). It could be that they were even revered by some of the Colossians as the perfect ones (*teleioi*). This "philosophy" was also ascetic or world-denying. The commands "do not handle, do not taste, do not touch" (2:21) promoted a certain "rigor of discipline, self-abasement and severity of the body" (v. 23).[15] Certain judgments

[14] *Philosophia* in *BDAG*, 1059.

[15] Troy Martin contends that the Cynics' "prohibition against perishable consumer goods and understanding of humility as severity of the body" provide sufficient evidence that the opponents were Cynics in his *By Philosophy and Empty Deceit: Colossians as Response to a Cynic Critique* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 65–78, 205 (quote). Richard DeMaris, however, argues that the opponents are Middle Platonists in *The Colossian Controversy: Wisdom in Dispute at Colossae* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994). Eduard Schweizer saw the opponents as Pythagorean, *The Letter to the Colossians* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1982), 81, 129–33, 136f., 151. Morna Hooker sees the polemical statements of Colossians as generic admonitions presupposing *no particular* philosophy or group, "Were There False Teachers at Colossae?" in *Christ and the Spirit in the NT*, eds. Barnabas Lindars and Stephen Smalley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 315–31.

were also passed on "food and drink" (in order to attain mystical experiences? cf. Dan 10:1-5; *4 Ezra* 6.31, 35; 9:23-28; *3 Bar.* 4.13-15) and the observance of "a festival or a new moon or sabbath days" (2:16).

Mystery Cult Devotees? Who were these false teachers? Their generalized portrait in Colossians has prompted numerous theories on the subject. One advocates that they were devotees of a pagan mystery cult.[16] This theory interprets the Greek word for "enter into, take one's stand" (*embateuō*, Col 2:18), as describing an initiate entering the sanctuary of a mystery cult to consult an oracle. This view is based on inscriptions discovered in the sanctuary of Apollo at Claros (near Ephesus).[17] It argues that certain Colossian Christians joined with certain pagan mystagogues in a cultic life devoted to the "elemental spirits." Veneration of angels as a means of warding off evil was also part of the folk religion of the area.[18] Some components of Gnosticism could also have been present in the cult, according to this view, but see the discussion under "Early Jewish Gnostics?" below.

Jewish-Christian Ascetics? A second theory regards the Colossian heresy as a form of Jewish-Christian mystical asceticism.[19] It interprets *ha heoraken embateuō* (2:18) as "entry into the heavenly sanctuary that one sees in a state of ecstasy," *thrēskeiea tōn aggelōn* as the "angelic worship" of God or "worship with the angels" (subjective genitive, 2:18; *T. Job* 48; *Ascen. Isa.* 8.17; 9.28–34), and *tapeinophrōsyne* ("humility," 2:18, 23) as denoting ascetic practices (e.g., Dan 10:1-5). In this view, the observance of certain rituals and ascetic practices gained for the devotee an entry into heaven that climaxed in joining the angels in the worship of God (Dan 10:1-5; *4 Ezra* 6.31, 35; 9:23-28; *3 Bar.* 4.13-15).

[16] Martin Dibelius, "The Isis Initiation in Apuleius and Related Initiatory Rites," in Francis and Meeks, *Conflict at Colossae*, 61–121; Clinton E. Arnold, *The Colossian Syncretism: The Interface between Christianity and Folk Belief at Colossae* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1995). For interpretations of *embateuō*, see *BAGD*, 254.

[17] For a survey of temple sites (including that of Artemis) in or near Ephesus, see Paul Trebilco, *The Early Christians in Ephesus from Paul to Ignatius* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004), 15–37.

[18] *Thrēskeia tōn aggelōn* (Col 2:18), according to Clinton Arnold, *Colossian Syncretism*, 61–101.

[19] Fred O. Francis, "Humility and Angelic Worship in Col 2:18," in Francis and Meeks, *Conflict at Colossae*, 163–95.

Parallels to such a view would also be at Qumran, where members believed that they would not only fellowship with angels in the future life but also join with them in the common praise of God in the present (e.g., 1QSa 2.9; 1QH 3.21–23; 11:10–14). The Qumran community also observed their own calendar, followed Sabbath regulations, had certain food distinctions, and observed numerous ascetic practices (e.g., Sabbath, CD 10.14–11.18; food, 12.11–2; times 16.2–6). The parallels from Qumran have led many to believe that a similar form of sectarian Judaism was combatted at Colossae.[20]

Early Jewish Gnostics? A third theory is that the Colossian opponents adhered to an early form of Gnosticism.[21] The language of "wisdom," "knowledge," and "fullness" (*plērōma*), the boasting and arrogance of the adherents, world-negating asceticism, and the appearance of a so-called "Redeemer myth" in Colossians 1:5-20[22] provide the support for this view. The Nag Hammadi writings also contain books reflecting an early form of non-Christian *Jewish* Gnosticism (e.g.,

[20] The following work provides a survey and critique of this view: E. Yamauchi, "Sectarian Parallels: Qumran and Colossae," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 121 (1964), 141–52.

[21] Lohse, *Colossians and Philemon*, 120–30. The following scholars have detected elements of Gnosticism at Colossae: J. B. Lightfoot, M. Dibelius, G. Bornkamm and S. Lyonnet, as cited in Francis and Meeks, *Conflict at Colossae*. See also F. F. Bruce, "Colossians Problems Part 3: The Colossian Heresy," *Bib Sac* 141 (1984), 195–208; and Petr Pokorný, *Colossians: A Commentary* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991), 117–21.

[22] Suggested parallels to Colossians 1:15-20 in Gnostic writings are the preexistence of the Redeemer (*First Apoc of James* 24; *Treatise on the Resurrection* 44; *Sophia* 94), the title of *plērōma* (*Peter to Philip* 136), and the subjection of the rulers (*The Archons*, 144–45; [Col 2:15] *Seth* 56; *Truth* 25–26). In the wisdom traditions of Hellenistic Judaism there are also similar parallels (e.g., Wis 7:22–9:2; Prov 8:22–9:6; Sir 1; 24; *Odes Sol.* 41). The notion of a first-century redeemer is contested. N. T. Wright prefers Jewish wisdom-traditions, not Gnosticism, for the background of the hymn, *The Climax of the Covenant* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 99ff.; see also Dunn, *Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 268–69, 275–77. Gordon Fee argues that Paul's Christology (including this "hymn") has its origins in Jewish messianism (2 Sam 7; Ps 2) and not Jewish (personified) Wisdom, *Pauline Christology: An Exegetical-Theological Study* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2007), 318–25, 552–54, appendix A.

Eugnostos, Apocalypse of Adam, Paraphrase of Shem, Thunder).[23] The entire collection advocates a world-denying asceticism. Furthermore, the *Gospel of Truth*, a Christian-Gnostic writing from Nag Hammadi, uses language that is characteristic of Colossians. It mentions "knowledge" of the savior who came from the *plērōma* (16.3–17.4), the superior status of those who possess this revealed knowledge (22.3–19), and the eternal origins of the Redeemer who came from the Father (41.4–20). Thus, the Colossian heresy that Paul (or his disciple) describes included ideas and practices that are *also* found in the Gnosticism, exemplified by the Nag Hammadi writings and containing certain Jewish elements (Col 2:16-17), which could also be regarded as Jewish syncretism.[24]

Paul's Response

In response to the false teachers (whoever they were), Paul provides a corrective that reflects considerable interaction with Gnosticism. He utilizes the hymn that speaks of the creation of the powers through Christ (1:15-20) and agrees that Christ is head of the powers (2:10) but argues that Christ's death on the cross has disarmed and publicly disgraced them (2:15). Paul exhorts his readers to "seek the things that

[23] See John D. Turner's case for Jewish and non-Christian strands of Gnosticism in his "Sethian Gnosticism: A Literary History," ed. Charles W. Hedrick and Robert H. Hodgson (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1986), 55–86, and *Sethian Gnosticism and the Platonic Tradition*, Bibliothèque copte de Nag Hammadi Études 6 (Quebec: Les presses de l'Universiste Laval; Louvain: Peters, 2001). With sensitivity to the debate, Wallace F. Taylor reminds us that much of Paul's teaching was also revered by later Gnostics, such as Valentinus of Rome (ca. 135–165), *Paul: Apostle to the Nations* (2012), 73–75, 169, 301–3. The comparisons of Gnosticism and the NT have raised for many a chicken-or-the-egg causality dilemma; see Pheme Perkins, *Gnosticism and the New Testament* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), and her "Gnosticism," *NIDB* 2, 581–84.

[24] On other examples of Jewish syncretism, accommodation, or acculturation, see the Jewish sorcerer, Bar Jesus/Elymas, Acts 13:6-1; Jews who worshipped angels and practiced sorcery, according to Celsus, Origen *Cels*. 1.26; Judaism as a Hellenistic philosophy according to Philo (*Opif*. 8.128; *Mos* 2.2; *Spec* 3.185–87), and an inscription from Phrygia of Julia Severa who was both a synagogue benefactor and priestess of the imperial cult, cited in Paul R. Trebilco, *Jewish Communities in Asia Minor* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 58–59.

are above, where Christ is seated at God's right hand" (3:1) and not focus on the lower regions where the powers are relegated. Through Christ's death, Paul writes, the church is already holy and needs no further purification (1:22). The commands of the law are only human precepts (2:22-23). Establishing household duties similar to popular Hellenistic ethics,[25] Paul promotes an ethical behavior that takes a positive view of the world (3:18–4:1), a perspective that is free from the control of powers and principalities and "hid with God in Christ" (3:3).[26]

The Genre

It is apparent that Colossians follows the basic pattern of early Christian letters.[27] There is a letter opening with senders, addressees, and greetings (1:1-2). It is followed by a thanksgiving section that contains a prayer of intercession and ends with an eschatological note (1:3-11). The letter body (1:12–2:23) includes christological hymns, ethical exhortations, and polemics against false teaching. The lengthy parenesis (3:1–4:6) contains moral injunctions and lists of household duties. The letter closing (4:7-18) has recommendations of Tychicus and Onesimus (vv. 7-9), greetings from various coworkers (vv. 10-15), closing instructions (vv. 16-17), and both a personal signature and benediction (v. 18).

The Colossians letter also has an official and public character. The senders are identified as the apostle Paul and his associate Timothy (1:1), making it an official pronouncement. The public character is further indicated by the directive to circulate the letter to the church of the Laodiceans (4:16). Finally, the identification of coworkers who will deliver the letter (4:7) and the implication that an amanuensis or

[25] For Greco-Roman examples, see Philodemus, *Concerning Household Management*, 29–30, 38; Areius Didymus, *Epitome*, 148–49; Aristotle, *Pol.* 1.1253b, 1–14; Seneca, *Epistles* 89, 94–95. See also C. J. Martin, "The *Haustalfeln* (Household Codes) in African American Biblical Interpretation," in C. H. Felder, ed., *Stony the Road We Trod* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 206–31; Eugene Boring, "Household Codes," *NIDB* 2, 890.

[26] H. Koester, *Introduction to the NT*, vol. 2 (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982), 265–66; Sumney, *Colossians*, 2–6.

[27] See "Basic Characteristics of Ancient Letters" section of chap. 2 in this book, especially pp. 32–36.

executive secretary was employed in the letter body (4:18) enhance the apostolic authority of the sender.

The Rhetorical Structure of Colossians

The rhetorical function of the letter is epideictic. Although the (anti-Gnostic) polemics in 2:8-23 have the appearance of forensic rhetoric, they lack reference to any specific wrongdoing committed in the past (e.g., Gal 1:6f.; 3:1-5; 4:8-20; 5:7). The rhetorical questions in Colossians 2:20-21 possibly reflect a particular situation but are probably literary devices (cf. Gal 4:8-11) used to convey pathos at the conclusion of the argument in chapter 2. The panegyric creation hymn (Col 1:15-20) and the encomium of Christ the Lord (2:6-15) promote the anti-Gnostic strategy of Mediterranean Christianity, beginning perhaps in the lifetime of Paul and extending well into the second century. The lengthy parenetic section (3:1–4:6) also displays the common virtues and values of Hellenistic Christianity. As shown in our studies of Romans and 2 Timothy, demonstrative rhetoric includes both the praise of common values and the censure of unacceptable practices. Even Paul's epideictic letter to the Romans includes invectives against opponents (e.g., 16:17-20). Therefore, in Colossians as well he seeks to intensify adherence to the common faith by employing both praise and censure (e.g., thesis statement in Col 2:8).

The Rhetorical Structure of Colossians

I.	Epistolary prescript	1:1-2
	Senders	1:1
	Addresses and Greetings	1:2
II.	Proem: The apostolic message of Christ's cosmic lordship (theological foundation for diegesis, statement of case)	1:3–2:5
	A. Thanksgiving for their faith and love Commendation of Epaphras as faithful minister of Christ	1:7
	B. Intercession for their growth in Christ	1:9-11
	C. *Encomium* of Christ's cosmic lordship	1:12-23
	1. Introduction[28]	1:12-14

[28] See the following works that designate 1:12-14 as the introduction to the Christ hymn of Col 1:15-20, Lohse, *Colossians and Philemon*, 32–33;

	2. *Encomium*: Lord of the cosmos and the church	1:15-20
	3. Hortatory application (peroration)	1:21-23
	D. The apostolic office that proclaims Christ's lordship	1:24-2:5
	1. General mission: to make known to everyone the revelation of the mystery	1:24-29
	2. Specific example of Paul's relations with Colossae	2:1-5
	E. Hortatory application functioning as peroration of the above proem	2:6-7
III.	Diegesis (statement of case): Submit to Christ's lordship, not human traditions and the elemental spirits	2:8-23
	A. Thesis to be demonstrated	2:8
	B. Enthymeme supporting the relevance of Christ's lordship in Christian life and faith	2:9-15
	C. Conclusion of enthymeme: Therefore do not subject yourself to human ordinances and angelic worship	2:16-19
	D. Peroration	2:20-23
	1. Union with Christ frees us from the elemental spirits and human regulations	2:20-22
	2. These human regulations have no real value	2:23
IV.	*Apodeixis* (practical demonstration of evidence): How to live in union with risen Christ[29]	3:1–4:6
	A. Introduction: Seek Christ who is above, not the powers below	3:1-4
	1. *Protasis*: "So if you have been raised . . ."	3:1a
	2. *Apodosis*: "Seek . . . set your minds . . . "	3:1b-2

E. Schweizer, *The Letter to the Colossians*, trans. A. Chester (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1982), 45–49.

[29] "Become what you are," Pindar *Pythian Odes* 2.72, cited in Dunn, *Theology*, 630. The full maxim *genoi' hoios essi mathōn* is "become what you are having learned" or "learn and become who you are." It is Pindar's wise advice to King Hieron of Syracuse who must deal with the schemes and slanders of the royal court (ca. 470 BCE). Dunn sees this maxim of Pindar as illustrating the Pauline ethical dialectic of the indicative ("raised with Christ") and imperative ("set your minds on things that are above"), mentioned here and in, e.g., Rom 6:11.

3. Enthymeme: "For you have died . . . " 3:3-4
B. Topic 1: Personal ethics in Christ, "put on the new self" (baptism metaphor) 3:5-17
1. Negative exhortation: put to death the vices of the old self 3:5-9
2. Positive exhortation: clothe yourself with the new self 3:10-17
C. Topic 2: Christian social ethics (world-affirming household rules of Hellenism) 3:18–4:6
1. Exhortations to wives and husbands 3:18-19
2. Exhortations to children and parents 3:20-21
3. Exhortations to slaves and masters 3:22–4:1
4. General exhortations (peroration of topic 2) 4:2-6
V. Epistolary postscript 4:7-18
A. Peroration (summary of arguments) 4:7-17
1. Paul commends Tychicus and Onesimus, who are "faithful ministers" and "beloved brothers" (cf. 1:7, 23) 4:7-9
2. Greetings from Aristarchus, Mark, and Jesus, "of the circumcision," who are Paul's coworkers for God's kingdom (cf. 2:11-13) 4:10-11
3. Greetings from their own Epaphras (1:7), whose prayer is that they stand mature and be assured in all that God wills (1:9, 28), with an apostolic commendation 4:12-13
4. Other greetings topoi and accompanying exhortations 4:14-17
B. Signature and benediction (allusion to chains, cf. 4:13) 4:18

The battle regarding how to understand the extent and nature of Christ's lordship that we mentioned at the beginning of this section is certainly ready to break out when reading and considering the hymn in Colossians 1:15-20. But this battle really is latent and ready to break out throughout the letter, for it is unclear to what extent the "mysteries" that Paul describes show evidence of Christ's lordship through time, and it is unclear to what extent Paul's use of Hellenistic household codes in Colossians 3:8–4:6 are culture affirming or culture transforming. It is in the active reading and consideration of questions like these that

Christians fulfill their calling to be faithful readers of Scripture, and by implication, faithful followers of the Christ who is firstborn of all creation and head of the church.

Fig. 13: Road leading from theater to stadium, Ephesus.

Ephesians

The book titled "The Letter of Paul to the Ephesians" is both prestigious and puzzling for the modern reader. It ranks high among the New Testament letters because of its emphasis on Christ and the church. Martin Luther favored it as the "true kernel and marrow" of the New Testament. C. H. Dodd bestowed on it the lofty title, "the crown of the Pauline writings."[30]

Ephesians is a puzzle for the following reasons. First, we do not know who the intended recipients were. The earliest Greek manuscripts omit "in Ephesus" from 1:1. Second, we are not certain if Paul himself wrote the book. The vocabulary, style, and theology of Ephesians differ considerably from Paul's undisputed letters. Third, we cannot be sure why Ephesians was written. Paul's letters usually respond to some specific historical

[30] Quotes from C. L. Mitton, *Ephesians*, NCBC (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1976), 2; see also N. Alexander, "The Epistle for Today," in *Biblical Studies* in *Honor of W. Barclay*, ed. J. McKay and J. Miller (WJK, 1976), 112–18.

situation, and any description of a situation that would prompt the letter is lacking in Ephesians. Fourth, we are uncertain about what type of document Ephesians represents. Although it begins and ends similar to a Pauline letter, its contents are more characteristic of a treatise or homily. In this section we will explore the questions just mentioned, as well as the thought milieu, rhetorical function, and structure of the book.[31]

The Recipients

The words "in Ephesus" are absent from two early Greek manuscripts (p46, B), some old codices that were known to Basil of Cappadocia, and the Greek text used by Origen. Marcion (140 CE) labeled it the letter "To the Laodiceans" (cf. Col 4:16), although there is no evidence to support this label. The general character of the book and its lack of reference to specific situations support the omission of "in Ephesus."

Because of the omission of this destination, it has been argued that the document was a circular letter to churches in a broad region. Asia Minor would have been the most likely location since the book has literary ties to Colossians. It was probably carried from one place to another by a courier (e.g., Tychicus, Eph 6:21).[32] The letter's general character and distinct emphasis on the universal church (e.g., 1:22; 2:19-22; 5:23-25) also support this view. Furthermore, the homily-like genre of Ephesians fits with its possible function as a circular letter.

Another theory connected with the destination of the letter is that Ephesians was a cover letter for Paul's body of writings.[33] According to

[31] For commentaries and other studies on Ephesians, see Abbott, *Ephesians and Colossians*; M. Barth, *Ephesians*, 2 vols., AYB 34, 34A (New York: Doubleday, 1974); Ernest Best, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Ephesians*, ICC (London: T&T Clark, 1998); V. P. Furnish, "Ephesians, Epistle to the," *AYBD* 2, 535–42; E. J. Goodspeed, *The Meaning of Ephesians* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1933); A. T. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, WBC (Dallas: Word, 1990); A. G. Patzia, *Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon*; Mitton, *Ephesians*; Sampley et al., *Eph, Col*, 9–40; Cohick, *Ephesians*.

[32] The related suggestion that Tychicus was the courier and that a blank was left in the letter for him to fill in the name of each church that he visited is merely a conjecture (Guthrie, *NTIntro*, 510–11).

[33] This theory was developed in Goodspeed, *The Meaning of Ephesians*, and with some qualifications in Mitton, *Ephesians*, 7–18 and David Trobisch,

this view, Ephesians served as an introductory letter for the collection of Paul's writings near the end of the first century after the publication of Acts renewed an interest in Paul. As an introduction to the Pauline corpus, Ephesians summarizes much of Paul's teaching in the undisputed letters (e.g., Rom, 1 and 2 Cor, Gal, 1 Thess). However, in contrast to the way that Polycarp identifies his letter to the Philippians as a cover letter for the letters of Ignatius (13.2), Ephesians does not refer to itself as a cover letter nor is there text-critical support for it. See our discussion of the genre and rhetorical function of Ephesians on pages 172–75.

Authorship

Arguments Supporting Authenticity. The case for authenticity seems strong at first. Ephesians claims to be written by Paul (1:1; 3:1; cf. 4:1). His favorite themes of grace, priority of faith over works of the law (2:8-10), body of Christ, Spirit, and election (4:4-6) surface again, and even the hymn of 1:3-14 recalls similar poems in 1 Corinthians 13 and Philippians 2. Clement of Rome quotes from Ephesians (46.6/Eph 4:4). The letter was known by Polycarp, Ignatius, Tertullian, and Marcion in the second century. Both Irenaeus and Clement of Alexandria assumed that Paul was the author. *Exegesis of the Soul* 131.9–13 and *Hypostasis of the Archons* 86.20–26, from Nag Hammadi, attribute Ephesians 6:12 to Paul. It was not until the time of Erasmus (sixteenth century) that the Pauline authorship of Ephesians was questioned.[34]

Arguments against Authenticity. The authenticity of Ephesians is called into question on the following points: its distinct language and style, dependency on Colossians, and advanced theology. Concerning its special language and style, there are thirty-eight words in Ephesians not found elsewhere in the NT and 44 additional words not used in Paul's undisputed writings. The stylistic peculiarities are more notice-

---

Paul's Letter Collection: Tracing the Origins (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), 101, n. 22.

[34] For further attestation of its Pauline authorship, see Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2002), 2–6. Although Edward Evanson in 1792 was the first scholar to doubt that Paul wrote Ephesians, Erasmus, 1519, was the first to raise questions about unusually long sentences and different style in Ephesians (*Anotationes in Novum Testamentum*).

able. Erasmus was the first to call attention to the long, ponderous sentences (e.g., 1:3-14, 15-23; 3:17; 4:11-16 in KJV or Greek text).[35] Others have noted the many relative clauses, the piling up of synonyms (e.g., 1:19 uses four separate words for *power*), the use of contrasting parallel phrases (e.g., 4:12, 16-17), and the constant use of prepositions, especially *in* (e.g., 1:3-10). All of these traits seem far removed from the more pastoral approach of Paul, whose letter-writing habits are known to us from the undisputed writings (e.g., personal appeals, rhetorical questions, and a straightforward approach).[36]

The literary dependence of Ephesians on Colossians, outlined in the next section, argues further against Pauline authorship. Why would Paul borrow terms such as "stewardship" and "mystery" from a book like Colossians and invest them with different meanings for a new situation? Additional examples are found in the next section.

The theology of Ephesians might reflect a period in the church after the time of Paul. The use of "church" in Ephesians as universal (1:22; 3:10, 21; 5:24-25, 27) resembles early catholic conceptions of the emerging orthodoxy, not Paul's usual use of "church" for individual congregations. In the undisputed Pauline writings (including Colossians), "church" refers to the local congregation, with only a few exceptions (e.g., 1 Cor 3:17; 12:12-13; cf. Col 1:18). In Ephesians 3:4-6, the "mystery of Christ" is the unity of Jews and Gentiles in the body of Christ—a cause for which Paul was still fighting (e.g., Rom 9–11).

As in 2 Thessalonians, the divine actions once attributed to God in Paul's undisputed writings are ascribed to Christ in Ephesians: Christ reconciles Jew and Gentile (Eph 2:16)/God reconciles (Rom 5:10);

[35] The statistics on sentence length are striking. Morton and McLeman (1966: table 51) have counted 9 out of 100 sentences in the Greek text that have more than fifty words, whereas the incidence of sentences of this length in the letters certainly written by Paul is much lower: 3 of 581 sentences in Rom 1–4; 1 of 621 sentences in 1 Cor 1–4; 2 of 334 sentences in 2 Cor 1–3; 1 of 181 sentences in Gal; 1 of 102 sentences in Phil; and 1 of 81 sentences in 1 Thess, in Victor Furnish, "Ephesians, Epistle to the," *AYBD* 2, 540.

[36] Ralph P. Martin, *NT Foundations*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1978), 226; Abbott, *Ephesians and Colossians*, xiv–xx; Margaret Y. MacDonald, *Colossians and Ephesians*, 15–17; Talbert, *Ephesians and Colossians*, 3–12; Stephen E. Fowl, *Ephesians*, NTL (WJK, 2012), 17–27. Fowl admits that arguments for both sides are based, at best, on "finely tuned arguments about probability" (17).

Christ appoints apostles and prophets (Eph 4:11) / God appoints (1 Cor 12:28). And in the quotation from Psalm 68:18 in Ephesians 4:8, the letter's high Christology makes it plain that Christ is the LORD mentioned in that Old Testament text.[37] Special prominence is also given to apostles and prophets in Ephesians. For example, they are the foundation of the church (Eph 2:20; cf. Christ is the foundation in 1 Cor 3:11) and reference is made to "holy apostles" as recipients of God's revelation (Eph 3:4-5). Because of these well-developed themes, dependency on Colossians, and distinctive vocabulary, the author of Ephesians seems to be living in a situation after the time of Paul.[38]

A Comparative Study of Ephesians

A Comparison of Themes. Related to the concerns of authorship, purpose, and literary character is the question of the relationship of Ephesians to other NT books. We will first note the extensive parallels between Ephesians and Colossians, next, significant comparisons with the undisputed Pauline letters, then suggestive parallels between Ephesians and the NT writings of Luke-Acts and 1 Peter.

Ephesians and Colossians

Topic[39]	*Eph*	*Col*
1. Redemption, forgiveness	1:7	1:14, 20
2. The all-inclusive Christ	1:10	1:20
3. Intercession for the readers	1:15-17	1:3-4, 9
4. The hope of the riches of his glory	1:18	1:27
5. Christ's dominion and headship	1:21-22	1:16-18
6. God made you alive in/with Christ	2:5	2:13

[37] Seth M. Ehorn, "The Use of Psalm 68(67).19 in Ephesians 4.8: A History of Research," *Currents in Biblical Research* 12, no. 1 (2012): 18–19.

[38] Lynn H. Cohick still raises issues about pseudonymity in antiquity that was suspect (pp. 19–27), arguing for Pauline authorship from Rome in the early 60s, *Ephesians*, 28–33.

[39] The "topics" are derived from Ephesians and follow its order.

7. Aliens/estranged brought near /reconciled	2:12-13	1:21-22
8. Abolishing the commandments/ordinances	2:15	2:14
9. Paul the prisoner/ fellow prisoner	3:1	4:3, 10
10. Paul commissioned, divine mystery made known to him	3:2-3	1:25-26
11. Paul, minister of universal gospel	3:6-7	1:23, 25
12. Paul to make known the mystery to all	3:8-9	1:27
13. Lead a worthy life/lives	4:1	1:10
14. With all humility and patience, bearing one another	4:2	3:12-13
15. Christ the head unites/nurtures his body (the church)	4:15-16	2:19
16. Put away old self and put on new self	4:22-23	3:5-10, 12ff.
17. No fornication and impurity among you	5:3-6	3:5-9
18. Live wisely, making the most of the time	5:15	4:5
19. Sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, giving thanks to God	5:19-20	3:16-17
20. Tables of household codes for wives, husbands, children, parents, slaves, and masters	5:21–6:9	3:18–4:1
21. Paul the prisoner exhorts perseverance in prayer	6:18-20	4:2-3
22. Tychicus sent to inform the readers about Paul and to encourage them	6:21-22	4:7-8

The dependency of Ephesians on Colossians best accounts for the evidence. Words and phrases from Colossians appear in Ephesians clothed with new meaning (e.g., parallels 10, 15). There are also places where passages from Colossians seem conflated (combined) in Ephesians (parallels 1, 3, 11). It seems that the author of Ephesians was so familiar with Colossians that he even followed the basic argument of the letter and brought together passages that were scattered in the earlier book. Now we will note the parallels between Ephesians and the undisputed letters of Paul.

Ephesians and Romans

Topic	*Eph*	*Rom*
1. Elected to be holy	1:4-5	8:29
2. God's will accomplishes all	1:11	8:28
3. Not saved by works	2:8-9	4:2
4. We have access to God through faith	2:18; 3:11f.	5:1-2
5. The gift of God's grace	3:7; 4:7	
6. Their senseless minds were darkened and they gave themselves over to immorality	4:17-19	1:21-22, 24
7. The acceptable will of the Lord	5:10, 17	12:2
8. Have no fellowship with the works of darkness	5:11	13:12
9. God shows no partiality	6:9	2:11

Ephesians and 1 Corinthians

Topic	*Eph*	*1 Cor*
1. Church as a building and temple with a foundation, which God causes to grow	2:20-21	3:6, 9, 11f., 16
2. Paul, least of all saints, enabled by God's grace to preach	3:8	15:9-11
3. God has given apostles, prophets, and teachers for the church	4:11	12:28
4. Let him labor, working with his hands	4:28	4:12
5. Be imitators of God	5:1	4:14, 16 (be imitators of [Paul])
6. Immoral people will not inherit God's kingdom	5:5	6:9-10
7. Husband is head of wife, Christ is head of church	5:23-32	11:3 (Christ is head of man)
8. We are members of Christ's body; Gen 2:24	5:30-31	6:15-16

Ephesians and 2 Corinthians

Topic	*Eph*	*2 Cor*
1. Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God to the saints	1:1-2	1:1-2
2. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ	1:3	1:3
3. The seal of the Holy Spirit	4:30	1:22
4. Paul, an ambassador in chains, speaks boldly	6:20	5:20 (ambassadors for Christ)

Ephesians and Galatians

Topic	*Eph*	*Gal*
1. In the fullness of time	1:10	4:4
2. The promise of the Spirit	1:13	3:14
3. Saved by faith not works	2:8-9	2:16
4. Christ who loved us and gave himself up for us	5:2, 25	2:20
5. Do not be people pleasers but servants of Christ	6:6, 9d	1:10, 2:6c

Ephesians and Philippians

Topic	*Eph*	*Phil*
1. An offering and sacrifice to God; what is acceptable to the Lord	5:2, 10	4:18
2. Pray always with all prayer and supplication	6:18	4:6

Ephesians and 1 Thessalonians

Topic	*Eph*	*1 Thess*
1. The redemption we are to obtain	1:14	5:9
2. Those having no hope	2:12	4:13
3. Lead a life worthy of your calling	4:1	2:12 (worthy of God)

4. Edification (*oikodomē*)	4:12	5:11
5. Put on the breastplate of righteousness and the helmet of salvation	6:14-16	5:8 (breastplate of faith and love)

The above parallels of Ephesians with Paul's undisputed letters are so close at points and the changes so subtle yet profound that an acquaintance with these writings is probably presupposed. The parallels also argue favorably for Ephesians as an introductory letter for the Pauline corpus that summarizes much of its teachings (see earlier discussion). Now we will compare Ephesians with the other NT books of Luke, Acts, and 1 Peter.

Ephesians and Luke/Acts

Topic	*Eph*	*Luke/Acts*
1. Redemption through his blood	1:7	Acts 20:28
2. The plan (*boulē*) of God	1:11	Acts 20:27
3. "The promise of the Holy Spirit"	1:13	Acts 2:33
4. "Inheritance among the saints"	1:18	Acts 20:32
5. "God raised him up and appointed him to sit at his right hand"	1:20	Acts 2:32-35; 7:55
6. Will be saved by grace	2:8	Acts 15:11
7. Proclaimed the gospel of peace	2:17; 6:15	Acts 10:36a
8. "With all humility"	4:2	Acts 20:19
9. Pastors/shepherds, evangelists	4:11	Acts 20:28; 21:8
10. Build up the body/saints	4:12	Acts 20:32
11. "In righteousness and holiness"	4:24	Luke 1:75
12. Devil (*diabolos*)	4:27; 6:11	Luke 4:2ff.; Acts 10:38; 13:10
13. Be filled with the Spirit	5:18	Acts 2:4, 15
14. "Serving the Lord"	6:7	Acts 20:19
15. No partiality	6:9d	Acts 10:34
16. "Able to withstand"	6:13	Luke 21:15
17. "Your loins girded" (Gk. trans.)	6:14	Luke 12:35

Ephesians and 1 Peter

Topic	*Eph*	*1 Pet*
1. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ"	1:3	1:3
2. God raised Jesus, set him at his right hand, above all rule and authority, and put all things under his feet	1:20-22	3:22
3. You are citizens, members of God's household, built upon a foundation with Christ as cornerstone; a holy temple and dwelling place of God in the Spirit	2:19-22	2:4-6, 9
4. God's mystery hidden for generations is now revealed to his holy apostles and prophets	3:2-6	1:10-12

The literary dependency of Ephesians upon both 1 Peter and Luke/Acts is doubtful. It is plausible that 1 Peter made use of Ephesians or both may have had a common source. Richard Pervo has made a strong case that the author of Luke-Acts knew and made selective use of Paul's letters, especially Ephesians (e.g., Paul's address to the Ephesian elders; Acts 20:17-35).[40] It can also be argued that both followed a common source or tradition (e.g., eyewitness material of Paul's preaching in Ephesus).

Ephesians and the Qumran Literature. Some of the themes in Ephesians coincide with the teaching of the Dead Sea Scrolls (140 BCE – 68 CE) discovered at the village of Qumran in 1947 (written mostly in Hebrew and Aramaic). Although the author of Ephesians probably would not have agreed with the apocalyptic, exclusivist, and legalistic tendencies of the Qumran community, he seems to share other basic beliefs with the group. The following are some of the common themes and concerns:[41]

[40] See also Richard I. Pervo, *Dating Acts: Between the Evangelists and the Apologists* (Santa Rosa, CA: Polebridge, 2006), 77, 93, 109, especially 111–33, 141.

[41] Abbreviations for the Qumran literature signify the following: CD = Damascus Document, IQS = Manual of Discipline, IQM = War Scroll, IQH =

Ephesians and Qumran

Topics	*Eph*	*Qumran*
1. Divine predestination and election	1:4-5, 11	1QS 4:18–26
2. Conflicting spirits of light and darkness	5:8-14; 6:11f.	1QS 3.18–4.1; 1QM 1
3. Spiritual warfare of humankind	6:11-17	1QM 1; 15.4–18.9 1QM 3.13–4.26
4. Righteous built on a foundation; cornerstone	2:19-22	1QS 8.4–10
5. Emphasis on unity and community	2:13-19, 4:3-6, 13	*Yahad* "unity" in 1QS; 1QH; CD; 1QS 8.5; 9.19–20; CD 6.20–7.2
6. The disclosure of God's mysteries	1:9; 3:3-4 6:19	1QS 3.23; 1QH 4.21; 5.17–19; CD 2.2–13; 3.18–19
7. Awareness of God's revelation as a privilege of the faithful	1:9, 17-18	1QH 12.11–12, 24–25,

---

Thanksgiving Hymns, IQSa = Order of Congregation, IQpHab = Habakkuk Commentary. Qumran passages have been cited from: *The Dead Sea Scrolls: A New Translation*, ed. M. Wise, M. Abegg, and E. Cook (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 2005); see also *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English*, ed. G. Vermes (New York: Penguin, 1997). Note the importance of comparing contexts and viewpoints, as well as vocabulary, in Samuel Sandmel, "Parallelomania," *JBL* 81, no. 1 (1962): 1–13; H. Ringgren, "Qumran and Gnosticism," in U. Bianchi, ed., *The Origins of Gnosticism* (Leiden: Brill, 1970), 379–84; and Jonathan Z. Smith, *Drudgery Divine: On the Comparison of Early Christianities and the Religions of Late Antiquity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 54–84, 116–25.

	3:3-5, 9	28–29; 1QS 9.13–20; 1QpHab 7.1–8
8. Exhortations to forsake evil and do good	4:17–5:20	1QS 1.1–15; 5.1–4; 7; CD 6.11–7.6
9. Rules for marriage, women, and children	5:22–6:4	1QSa 1.4–11; CD 7.6–9; 11QT 64.2–6

There are general similarities in the above parallels but numerous specific differences. Note the following differences: no concerns at Qumran to make known God's mystery to the Gentiles (Eph 3:8-9) and no human/divine analogies exalting the ideal of marriage (Eph 5:21-33). Also, the "mystery of God's plan" has more diverse semantic associations at Qumran (e.g., order of cosmos, salvation, kingdom of Belial, human nature) than in Ephesians (1:9; 3:3-4, 9; 5:32; 6:19). Therefore, the general similarities are best explained as originating from a common Near Eastern thought-milieu rather than a specific pre-70 Palestinian setting.

Ephesians and Gnosticism. Comparisons with the Nag Hammadi Codices (180–220 CE, Sahidic Coptic) and other Gnostic writings (second–third-century patristic Greek) reveal possible Gnostic and anti-Gnostic influences. These are evident in the Gnostic-like vocabulary, the Christ hymns of earthly descent and heavenly ascent, the heavenly marriage motif, the call to awake, and the realized eschatology. Anti-Gnostic motifs are possibly found in the exhortations to responsible ethics in the world (*contra* libertinism), the view of God the Father (not the Demiurge) as creator of the world, and the exalted view of earthly marriage renounced by many Gnostics. We will outline each point below.[42]

[42] Citations of Gnostic books are from J. M. Robinson, ed., *Nag Hammadi Library*, rev. ed. (New York: HarperCollins, 1990); *The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus,* vol. 1, ANF; and Schneemelcher, *NT Apocrypha*

Topic	*Eph*	*Gnosticism*
1. Knowledge of divine mysteries	1:9; 3:3-4; 6:19	*Tri. Trac.* 126.10–27.15; *Gos. Truth* 21.4–10; 23; 24.30–25.15; contra Valentinianism in Irenaeus, *Haer.* 1.21.4.
2. *Plērōma*, the fullness	1:10, 23; 3:19; 4:13	*Plērōma*, the realm of the unknown God; *Gos. Truth* 16.31–37; 43.10–22; *Tri. Trac.* 125.30–35; 136.20–25; contra Valentinianism in Irenaeus, *Haer.* 2.1.2–4.
3. Principalities (*archē*) and powers in the heavenly places	1:21; 3:10; 6:12	Archons or spirits who inhabit lower heavenly spheres above earth. *Orig. World* 100.1–11; 102.20–24; 104.14–27; 111.20–25; *Ap. John* 4.18–21; *Hyp. Arch.* 97.6–9.
4. Perfection and unity the goal of redemption	4:13 ("perfect man")	*Gos. Philip* 70.5–9; 76.18–20 ("perfect man") *Gos. Truth* 24.25–25.15; *Tri. Trac.* 123.3–6.
5. The "dividing wall" of hostility (barrier)	2:14-15 (between Jew & Gentile)	All created beings separate from the heavenly *plērōma*; contra Valentinianism in Irenaeus, *Haer.* 2.8.2; 2.11.1.
6. Earthly descent and heavenly ascent of the redeemer	4:8-10	*Soph. Jes. Chr.* 118.15–119.17; *Gos. Truth* 22.2–22.15; 34.36–41.14.

1; 2. See Jonas, *Gnostic Religion*, 13–27; Rudolph, *Gnosis*, and our earlier discussion in footnotes 22–23.

7. Call for sleepers to awake	5:14	*Great Pow.* 39.33–40.7; *Gos. Truth* 22.2–20; *Acts Thom.* 100.43.
8. Heavenly marriage motif	5:22-32 (human and heavenly marriage)	Gnostic bridal chamber; *Gos. Philip* 69.1–71.35; 76.7–36.
9. Union of Christ and Church	5:25-27, 29, 32	Church as heavenly counterpart of Christ in Valentinianism in Irenaeus, *Haer.* 1.8.4; cf. *Tri. Trac.* 57.34–59.4; 94.20–22
10. Realized eschatology	2:1-6	*Exeg. Soul* 134.7–16; *Gos. Phil* 73.1–5; *Treat. Res.* 49.10–17.

Many of the above parallels are general similarities, which are interpreted differently in both writings (e.g., *gnōsis*, *plērōma*, "perfect man," or "maturity" [NRSV]). Therefore, whatever Gnostic concepts that may have surfaced in Ephesians have been Christianized in a manner suitable to emerging orthodoxy. Ephesians also contains themes that appear anti-Gnostic (see below). Despite some earlier traditions, the late date of the Gnostic writings and their generalized similarities with Ephesians rule out any direct dependence of Ephesians on any extant Gnostic book. The parallels suggest, however, a similar lexicon of vocabulary and images used by the author of Ephesians and certain Gnostics, reflecting possibly "the spirit of late antiquity" (Hans Jonas, 1963). Consider also the differences:

1. Ephesians has a positive concept of human marriage (5:21-33) in contrast to Gnostics who rejected it as proof of one's membership in the heavenly world. Some were even accused of regarding marriage as the work of Satan (e.g., Saturlinus in Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 1.24.2, and Severus in Epiphanius, *Panarion* 45.2.1).[43]

[43] *The* Panarion *of Epiphanius of Salamis: A Treatise Against Eighty Sects in Three Books,* book 1 (sects 1–46), based on the translation by Frank Williams (1987–2009), http://www.masseiana.org/panarion_bk1.htm#45.

2. The exhortations to responsible personal and social ethics in the Roman world (Eph 2:10; 4:1-2; 4:17–5:20; 5:21–6:9) are in opposition to the stance of those libertine Gnostics who believed that redemption frees one from all worldly obligations (e.g., in Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 1.6.2–3; Epiphanius, *Panarion* 25.1.4–6; 40.3.6).
3. References to God as Creator (Eph 3:9) and his plan to redeem the world (1:9-10) are in contrast to Gnosticism, which ascribed the creation of the world to an inferior deity, the Demiurge (*Orig. World* 100.1–101.9; *Ap. John* 10.7–15.13). The redemption of the material world is not found in any Gnostic systems (e.g., *Orig. World* 99.2–22).

The above themes in Ephesians inherently conflict with Gnostic thought. Unlike Colossians, there is no *explicit* evidence that Gnostic groups are opposed in Ephesians. For those who view Ephesians as Deutero-Pauline, it fits a tendency for early orthodox writings to define their beliefs and practices vis-à-vis their opponents. Therefore, the author of Ephesians may be outlining his beliefs and practices that have been defined (by him and others) in general opposition to a form of religion similar to Gnosticism. Paul himself seeks to define orthodoxy primarily against Judaizing opponents in Galatians and practices described in 1 Corinthians that would later come to be characteristic of certain forms of Gnosticism.

The Genre

There are numerous liturgical and hortatory features in Ephesians. Comparisons of Ephesians with Qumran and Gnosticism have already highlighted the traditional hymnic and confessional material (e.g., 1:3-14, 20-23; 2:4-7, 10, 14-18, 20-22; 3:5, 20-21; 4:48, 11-13; 5:2, 14, 25-27).[44] Both Colossians and Ephesians testify to the use of "psalms and hymns" in their worship (Col 3:16; Eph 5:19-20). The lengthy blessing in Ephesians 1:3-14 is reminiscent of the beginning of the "Eighteen Benedictions" used in the Jewish synagogue service.[45] The prayers for wisdom (1:15-23) and spiritual maturity (3:14-19) are for-

[44] See discussions of hymnic material in Barth, *Ephesians* 1, 6–10, 97–104; Martin, *NT Foundations* 2, 248–75.

[45] See Barrett, *NT Background*, 162; William W. Simpson, *Jewish Prayer and Worship* (Naperville, IL: SCM, 1965), 62–63. See "Amidah," *DJBP*, 30–31.

mal enough to be recited in worship. The teaching about spiritual death/life (2:1-10) and the exhortations to put off the old nature / put on the new nature mirror some baptismal liturgy (cf. 1 Pet 1:22–2:3; Justin Martyr, *First Apology* 61; Hippolytus, *Apostolic Tradition* 20). The list of household duties from Hellenistic Christianity (Eph 5:21–6:9; Col 3:18–4:1) are conveniently placed after the exhortations to righteous living (possibly added later).

The liturgical and hortatory features in Ephesians lend some support to the idea that it may have been a baptismal homily adapted for general circulation.[46] Another NT book, 1 Peter, is regarded by some as an early baptismal liturgy, although the distinct features of a baptismal liturgy have been less evident with Ephesians than 1 Peter.[47] The liturgical aspects of Ephesians are more evident, however, when the Pauline epistolary features are removed (1:1-2, 15-23; 3:1-13; 4:1; 6:21-22).

The epistolary features of Ephesians may indicate that the baptismal homily was eventually placed in letter form. This adaptation from homily to letter was either the work of the speaker/author or an editor from the same community, since a similar style pervades the book. The absence of specific addressees indicates that the letter was intended for several congregations, probably Pauline communities in western Asia Minor.

Holland Hendrix has also suggested that Ephesians is an epistolary decree in which the author recites universal benefactions of God and Christ and then proceeds to stipulate the appropriate honors, understood as the moral obligations of the beneficiaries.[48] These inscriptions of official civic resolutions were openly displayed in a public ceremony. Early Christian worship practices were not immune to the influences

[46] W. A. Meeks, ed., *The Writings of St. Paul* (New York: Norton, 1972), 121–22. Ernest Best notes, however, that the baptism references are too few, *Ephesians*, 61.

[47] For 1 Peter as a baptismal liturgy see J. N. D. Kelly, *The Epistles of Peter and Jude*, HNTC (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), 15–20; F. L. Cross, *I Peter: A Paschal Liturgy* (London: A. R. Mowbray and Co., 1954). See our comparison of Eph and 1 Pet (p. 167) and also J. Coutts, "Ephesians 1.3–14 and I Peter 1.3–12," *NTS* 3 (1956/57): 115–27.

[48] "On the Form and Ethos of Ephesians," *USQR* 42, no. 4 (1988): 3–15; see also Frederick W. Danker, *Benefactor: Epigraphic Study of a Gaeco-Roman and New Testament Semantic Field* (St. Louis: Clayton Publishing House, 1982), 451–52.

of their Graeco-Roman place of origins, which included Jewish and non-Jewish influences (e.g., Jesus is Lord, not Caesar).[49]

The parallels with Colossians and the undisputed letters indicate that Ephesians is a product of Pauline Christianity in the Graeco-Roman world. The author and his community were probably familiar with Colossians (also from the province of Asia) and also the collection of Paul's letters.[50] It is not implausible to conclude, therefore, that Ephesians was a baptismal homily from a Pauline community of the Graeco-Roman world, placed in letter form for general circulation among the churches of western Asia.

The Rhetorical Function

The view that Ephesians is an adapted form of a baptismal homily finds some support in the book's rhetorical function. Although the parenetic section (4:1–6:20) has an advisory aspect (to dissuade and persuade), it seems subordinate to the epideictic function of the book: to extol the common values of Pauline Christianity and intensify adherence to them. The opening blessing (1:3-14), formal prayers (1:15-23;

[49] Richard S. Ascough, in his book *What Are They Saying about the Formation of Pauline Churches* (New York: Paulist Press, 1998), examines the plausible influences of Jewish synagogues, philosophical schools, the ancient mysteries, and voluntary associations. See also Ascough, Harland, and Kloppenborg, eds., *Associations in the Graeco-Roman World: A Sourcebook* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2012).

[50] See our comparison in this chapter under the heading "Ephesians: A Comparative Study," 164–66. David Trobisch, *Paul's Letter Collection* (1994), based on his dissertation (1989), argues from external manuscript evidence and internal analysis that Paul authorized certain of his letters for publication (Rom, 1–2 Cor, Gal), which led to an extended edition (by his disciples) after his death (Eph, Phil, Col, 1–2 Thess). It culminated in a later comprehensive edition (Heb, 1–2 Tim, Titus, Phlm), analogous to the letter collections initiated by Cicero and Seneca. See also by Trobisch, "The Oldest Extant Editions of the Letters of Paul," http://www.religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=91. Although Paul intended for some of his letters to be circulated among the churches (1 Thess 5:27; cf. Col 4:16), there is no indication that Paul was conscious of producing scriptures. Murphy-O'Connor adopts the view of Knox and Goodspeed that Onesimus (of Phlm) is the same person who became bishop of Ephesus (Ign *Eph* 1.3; 2.1; 6.2) and suggests that *he* is responsible for the complete collection of Paul's letters, *Paul the Letter-Writer*, 130.

3:14-19), and other hymnic materials (2:4-8, 10, 14-18; 3:5, 20-21; 4:4-6, 8, 11-13, 22-24; 5:2, 14) support this encomiastic function. In the parenetic section, Ephesians 4:17–5:20 functions as specific exhortations to new converts, Ephesians 5:21–6:9 can be viewed as general exhortations to the community, and 6:10-20 as closing admonitions. In the context of the book, the above exhortations do not appear to be prompted by specific questions or problems of a particular congregation (cf. 1 Cor 7). They are stereotyped pareneses (Eph 5:21–6:8) and contain baptismal imagery (4:17–5:20). As in the New Testament book of Hebrews, the epideictic influence of both hymns and OT imagery is quite evident on what once were early Christian sermons.

The Structure of Ephesians

Even though Ephesians follows the basic pattern of Colossians with doctrinal exposition followed by practical exhortation, it lacks the polemical material of the former book. The rhetorical function of Ephesians is to extol the common values of a Christianity that represents an amalgam of Jews and Gentiles who worship Christ as Lord and intensify adherence to the values of the community (see also Romans). The liturgical and homiletical characteristics of Ephesians support this function.[51]

The Rhetorical Structure of Ephesians

I.	Epistolary prescript (possibly added later)	1:1-2
II.	Baptismal liturgy for new converts	1:3–3:21
	A. Opening praise to God for blessings and privileges received through Christ	1:3-14
	B. Intercessory prayer for initiates, closing with a hymn about Christ's headship over the church	1:15-23

[51] Structure derived from the translation of Ephesians and discussions of style and hymnic features in Barth, *Ephesians* 1, xxvii–10. Even if the Ephesians material originated with Paul, it is possible that it was fashioned by the apostle or one of his disciples into a kind of baptismal liturgy and homily for converts, implying a worship setting where the book was publicly read to the congregation. See J. C. Kirby, *Ephesians: Baptism and Pentecost* (London: SPCK, 1968); Nils Dahl, *Jesus and the Memory of the Early Church* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1976), 11–29. On the importance of rituals in the life of Pauline communities, see M. Y. MacDonald, *Colossians and Ephesians*, 18–19.

	C. Exhortations for newly baptized converts	2:1-22
	1. The significance of the baptismal act explained and proclaimed	2:1-10
	2. A reminder of their shameful past without Christ	vv. 11-12
	3. A reminder of how Christ has put right these disadvantages (hymn sung or chanted, vv. 14-18)	vv. 13-22
	D. Presence of Paul mediated to converts in apostolic address (3:1-13) and prayer (vv. 14-19) (possibly added later with epistolary features)	3:1-19
	E. Doxology and Amen	3:20-21
III.	Baptismal homily addressed to new converts and congregation	4:1–6:20
	A. Proem: Apostolic admonitions for personal responsibility and Christian unity	4:1-16
	1. Hymn extolling unity of the faith	4:4-6
	2. Text on ascending Messiah	4:8
	3. Exposition of text	4:7, 9-10
	4. Hymn on Messiah appointing officers for the church	4:11-13
	5. Reiteration of theme	vv. 14-16
	B. Address to new converts on right living	4:17–5:20
	1. Opening remarks about their former lives as Gentiles	4:17-21
	2. Analogy from baptismal act: Strip off old nature; put on new nature	vv. 22-24
	3. Negative aspect of analogy expounded: Put away immorality	vv. 25-31
	4. Positive aspect of analogy expounded: Walk in love	4:32–5:2
	5. Deeds of darkness and deeds of light	5:3-14
	hymnic call to awake	v. 14
	C. Recapitulation of proem and address to new converts	5:15-20
	Admonitions to continue in worship	vv. 19-20
	D. Address to households in the congregation (possibly added later with epistolary features)	5:21–6:9
	1. Admonitions to wives and husbands based on analogy between the church and Christ	5:21-33

	2. Admonitions to children and parents	6:1-4
	3. Admonitions to slaves and masters	6:5-9
	E. Apostolic admonition to congregation	6:10-20
	1. Put on God's armor for the spiritual warfare (baptismal allusion)	6:10-17
	2. Recapitulation of apostolic admonitions to congregation (cf. 4:1)	6:18-20
IV.	Epistolary postscript	6:21-24
	A. Personal remarks about the sending of Tychicus	vv. 21-22
	B. Closing salutation and benediction (reiteration of themes from opening greeting of 1:2)	6:23-24

Summary

In this chapter on Colossians and Ephesians we discussed the question of authorship, historical setting, literary features, genre, and structure. Because the linguistics and theology appeared to be post-Pauline, we appreciate the scholarly view, influential since the twentieth century, that both books are the products of a Deutero-Pauline school, composed after the apostle's death. However, based on similarities with his undisputed letters, we cannot conclude that nothing in these letters is from Paul. Since the locus of interpretation and theological development of Scripture occurs with the interpreter (the subject) and not at the founding event of composition (the object), which is impossible to recover, it is not inappropriate to call these letters Pauline, with the admission that they contain different (even later) emphases in comparison with Paul's undisputed letters.[52] Because they were, no doubt, recognized as authoritative by the churches that first received them, we also find no reasons for devaluing their importance as part of the biblical canon.[53]

[52] On the post-Enlightenment crises in the quests of authorship and authorial intent, see McLean, *Biblical Interpretation*, 35–142.

[53] See also Patrick Gray, "Does It Matter Whether Paul Wrote 'Paul's Letters'?" in his *Opening Paul's Letters: A Reader's Guide to Genre and Interpretation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2012), 145–51. Here are outlined the theological implications of the claim that Paul did not write letters ascribed to him. They range broadly across a continuum, depending on one's position on the force of the church's canonization of these texts as Scripture. J. D. G. Dunn, keenly aware of these issues, used the phrase "canonical pseudepigraphy," a legitimate

The parallels between Colossians and Ephesians are extensive, and dependency of the latter on the former is favored (not unlike that of 1 and 2 Thess). Both books also seem to have similar epideictic or demonstrative functions, even though Colossians contains polemics against some form of Jewish mysticism or early Gnosticism. Ephesians expressly extols the virtues and values of a Christianity that includes both Jews and Gentiles who worship Christ as Lord. The liturgical and homiletical aspects of the book on the new life in Christ would have been helpful for baptismal converts. Despite the fact that both works reflect the situation of an emerging orthodoxy, they seem to incorporate and Christianize spiritual and social themes from late antiquity (e.g., *gnōsis*, household rules). Whereas Colossians unveils a lofty vision of the cosmic Christ above all earthly powers, Ephesians expounds those enduring truths that enlighten and edify the Christian community.

---

speaking in and use of the great teacher's name, recognized as authoritative by the churches that first used the letters in question, *DLNTD*, 984. I. H. Marshall prefers the terms "allonymous" or "allonymity" to convey this faithful transmission, editing, or updating of Pauline teachings after the apostle's death by a disciple or associate, *The Pastoral Epistles*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 92. Raymond Collins concludes that the disputed letters of Paul "belong to the canon" because "what they represent is authoritative and normative for the churches"; *Letters That Paul Did Not Write*, 258.

CHAPTER 8

The Letter to the Philippians and Philemon

Introduction

Philippians and Philemon, together with Colossians and Ephesians, are often labeled the Prison Epistles of Paul. There are several similarities among these four letters. First, all purport to be written by the apostle Paul (Phil 1:1; Phlm 1; Col 1:1; 4:18; Eph 1:1; 4:1). Second, all refer to Paul as a prisoner (Phil 1:7, 13, 14; Phlm 1, 9; Col 4:18; Eph 3:1; 4:1; 6:20). Third, many of the same coworkers are mentioned. Both Philemon and Colossians mention Onesimus and Archippus (e.g., Phlm 1, 12, 17; Col 4:9-10, 17). Both Colossians and Ephesians refer to Tychicus in a very similar manner (Col 4:7; Eph 6:21). Philippians, Philemon, and Colossians all refer to Timothy as Paul's cosender (Phil 1:1; Phlm 1; Col 1:1).

Nevertheless, there are some difficulties with the classification of Paul's Prison Epistles. First, the Pauline authorship of Colossians and Ephesians is disputed in the academy. Second, Ephesians reads more like a baptismal liturgy or homily than an early Christian letter. Third, Philippians appears to stand apart from the other so-called Prison Epistles. Though Timothy is mentioned in this letter as in the others, there are other personal names in the Philippians that are unique: Epaphroditus (2:25; 4:18), Euodia, and Syntyche (4:2). The travel plans are distinctive (2:19, 23-29) and Paul's situation in prison was more uncertain than in the other letters (1:20-26; 2:17, 24).

Whether you will agree with our best estimates of the dates and location of Paul's imprisonment, we want you at least to recognize that for Paul, his status as a prisoner was not simply a frustrating hindrance to his mission plans. He regarded his imprisonments primarily as a condition into which God called him, and this accounts for his repeated use of the phrase "a prisoner of the Lord," or something

like that in Philemon 1, 9, reflected also in Ephesians 3:1; 4:1; and 2 Timothy 1:8.[1] Somewhat analogous to the ongoing influence of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's *Letters and Papers from Prison* and Martin Luther King Jr.'s "Letter from a Birmingham Jail," because of their instructive and hopeful messages from prison cells, so Paul's letters continue to pull readers away from any reliance on citizenship except that of heaven, to motivate them not to wait for human solutions but to anticipate what God and his son Jesus Christ will accomplish (Phil 1:19-21; 3:20-21).

Philippians

This letter opens a door into Paul's personal and pastoral character. It also provides helpful information about one early congregation with whom the apostle had fond and enduring relationships.

Fig. 14: Agora of Philippi. Image by C. Puskas.

[1] See Dale B. Martin, *Slavery as Salvation: The Metaphor of Slavery in Pauline Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990); and also Brian Rapske, *Paul in Roman Custody*, BAFC, vol. 3 (1994).

The City of Philippi

Paul addressed his letter to the Christians who resided in Philippi (1:1). At the time he wrote, Philippi was already an old city. It was founded in 357 BCE by Philip II of Macedon, the father of Alexander the Great, who named it after himself. It was located eight miles from the Aegean Sea in a fertile region enriched by an abundance of springs. Gold was also mined nearby.

After the Roman victory over the Persians in 168 BCE, Philippi became part of the Roman Empire and belonged to the first four regions of Macedonia. It was also a major station along the *Via Egnatia*, a Roman road stretching from the Adriatic coast to Byzantium. During the reign of Augustus (27 BCE–14 CE), Philippi became a Roman colony and military outpost. As a colony it enjoyed the benefits of *ius Italicum*, which gave the inhabitants the same economic and legal privileges as Italians.

Fig. 15: Via Egnatia, Philippi, connecting it with Neapolis and Thessalonica. Image by C. Puskas.

The strong Roman imprint on the city of Philippi sensitizes us to the political edge in Paul's letter to the church of that city. Though imprisoned by the Romans for criminal activity involved with proclaiming someone that the Romans executed to be the son of God, Paul unabashedly gushes over how well such criminal activity is spreading (Phil 1:12-18). He applies standard terms for the Roman emperor to Jesus Christ (Phil 2:11; 3:20; Horace, *Odes* 1.12.5–6) and offers an alternative to the Roman peace that appears in some ways to resemble a contemporary philosopher's criticism of the Roman peace.[2]

[2] For critiques of the Roman peace, see Phil 4:4-9; Epictetus, *The Discourses as Reported by Arrian, the Manual and Fragments*, trans. W. A. Oldfather (London: William Heinemann, 1967), 3.13.9–13. On Augustus as "divine

The Church at Philippi

The book of Acts and Paul's letters provide some information on the apostle's initial and continuing relationship with the church. Acts 16:6-40 provides a dramatic account of Paul's first visit to Philippi. The following five features find support in Philippians. First, a Roman presence is evident in the city (Acts 16:12, 21, 37-38; Phil 1:13, 22). Second, prominence is given to women at the establishing of the church (e.g., Acts 16:14, 40; Phil 4:2). Third, there is also the mention of hostile outsiders (Acts 16:19-24; cf. Phil 2:14) and the presence of Gentiles within the community (Acts 16:14-15, 27-34; Phil 2:19, 25; 4:2). Fourth, Paul stayed in contact with the Macedonian churches through Timothy (Acts 19:21-23; Phil 2:19, 20) and probably visited them again at least twice (Acts 20:1-3; 2 Cor 7:56). Fifth, the apostle mentioned gifts sent to him from Philippi (Phil 4:15-16; 2 Cor 8:1-5; Acts 26:17) and maintained a positive attitude toward the community throughout his ministry.[3]

The Opponents

Philippians 3:2–4:3 begins with some sharp warnings against false teachers and contains many statements that seem to denounce them. A variety of opinions have surfaced concerning the identities of the opponents presupposed in this passage.[4] This matters for our understanding of Philippians, because Paul's words will be understood differently depending on the way we visualize Paul's opponents. There is no default

---

Caesar" and "savior," see "In honor of Augustus, at Priene," in Frederick W. Danker, *Benefactor: Epigraphic Study of a Graeco-Roman and New Testament Semantic Field* (St. Louis: Clayton Publishing House, 1982), 215–22 (letter and decrees, ca. 9 BCE, with commentary by Danker).

[3] For more discussion of Acts 16 and Philippians, see Witherington, *Acts*, 486–503 and his *Paul's Letter to the Philippians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011), 2–4.

[4] Eighteen different types of opponents have been postulated by J. Gunther, *St. Paul's Opponents and Their Background* (Leiden: Brill, 1973), 2. See also Gerd Lüdemann, *Opposition to Paul in Jewish Christianity,* trans. M. Eugene Boring (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989), 103–9; Stanley E. Porter, ed., *Paul and His Opponents*, Pauline Studies 2 (Leiden: Brill, 2005); and Jerry L. Sumney, *Identifying Paul's Opponents*, JSNTSup 40 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990), 160–87.

setting here. Not to think about the identity of Paul's opponents in Philippians is itself an exegetical decision that will differentiate one's exegesis from other ways of understanding the text.

The clearest evidence regarding the identity of the opponents is that they were Jews who advocated the observance of Mosaic Law. The following data in Philippians 3:2–4:3 suggest a Judaizing threat. In describing his opponents as "dogs" (3:2), Paul would be denouncing the Judaizers with the same term of reproach they applied to immoral people or Gentiles (e.g., Isa 56:10-11; Matt 7:6; 15:26-27; *Pseudo-Clementine Homilies* 2.19). In Philippians 3:2, a subtle Greek word change is employed to underscore the derogatory tone: the opponents are called "mutilation" (*katatomē*) instead of the more positive "circumcision" (*peritomē*). Such defamation is reminiscent of Paul in Galatians 5:12, "I wish they . . . would castrate themselves!" The mention of true circumcision represents a stance in contrast to Judaism and Judaizing Christianity (e.g., Rom 15:8; Gal 2:7-9; Eph 2:11). The warning, "put no confidence in the flesh" (Phil 3:3), appears to be an implicit rebuttal of the Judaizers who did the opposite (e.g., Gal 6:13).

One apparent point of Paul's autobiographical sketch (Phil 3:4-11) is to respond to Jewish or Jewish-Christian claims of righteousness by works (cf. Rom 9:31; 10:5; Gal 2:21). Elsewhere Paul has referred to Jews "boasting" in their spiritual privileges (Rom 2:19-20). Paul's statements about not yet attaining perfection (Phil 3:12, 14) may be a dialogue with the Jewish practice of attaining righteousness through the law (Rom 9:30-32). The reference to the opponents as "enemies of the cross" (Phil 3:18) could either denote the Jews to whom the cross was a scandal (1 Cor 1:23) or Judaizing Christians who might have evaded Jewish ridicule of the cross by promoting circumcision (Gal 6:12).[5] The severely hyperbolic language in Philippians 3:19 may be abusive rhetoric expressing Paul's anger and not necessarily characterize a particular group (cf. Rom 16:18). Perhaps the group preaching Christ out of envy and selfish ambition (Phil 1:15, 17) is also comprised of

[5] Mikael B. Tellbe suggests that becoming Jewish offered the Christ followers at Philippi a way to avoid offering sacrifices to the emperor because Judaism was a *religio licita* and exempt from those local practices, "The Sociological Factors behind Philippians 3:1-11 and the Conflict at Philippi," *JSNT* 55 (1994): 97–121. For a survey of discussion of the Jewish or Judaizing opponents, see Ben Witherington, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011), 181–98.

Judaizing Christians. It is plausible that just as Judaizers infiltrated the Pauline church of Galatia, so also a similar occurrence may have taken place at Philippi[6]; this would explain the harsh language of Philippians 3:2, 18-19 (especially if it is a later letter fragment, an option we will consider later in this chapter).

In the past, some scholars have cited what appears to be Gnostic opposition from within the Philippi congregation. Although the case for pre-Christian Gnostics or Gnosticism as a coherent movement is currently suspect, there are noteworthy similarities between what Paul wrote against in the first century and this "spirit of late antiquity" found in the Gnostic writings.[7]

When Paul speaks of those who put confidence in the flesh (3:3-4), it is not too dissimilar from Gnostics who boast of their exalted spiritual state (e.g. *Book of Thomas the Contender* 138.8–13; *Treatise of the Great Seth* 60.4–13). Paul's priority of obtaining the "surpassing value of knowing (*gnōseōs*) Christ Jesus" (3:8) might be viewed as using Gnostic language used against the Gnostics. Paul's goal "to know" Christ and "the power of his resurrection" (3:10) and to "attain the resurrection from the dead" (v. 11) is a present experience already claimed by the Gnostics (*Exegesis on the Soul* 134.7–16; *Gospel of Philip* 73.1–5). That might be why Paul is quick to assert that he has not attained this state of perfection (Phil 3:12) in contrast to Gnostic

[6] Fee sees the Judaizers as a *potential* threat and finds no evidence that they have now infiltrated the community before Paul wrote to Philippi; Gordon D. Fee, *Paul's Letters to the Philippians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995), 293–94.

[7] Citations of Gnostic books are from Robinson, *Nag Hammadi Library*. It must be noted that the discovery of elaborate Gnostic systems with no apparent Christian influence, e.g., *Paraph. Shem, Apoc. Adam*, seems to indicate that Gnosticism had a longer and more independent development than many critics are willing to concede. See Jonas, *Gnostic Religion*, 13–27; Karen L. King, *What Is Gnosticism?* (Cambridge: Belknap, 2003); Pheme Perkins, *Gnosticism and the New Testament* (1993), and her "Gnosticism," *NIDB* 2, 581–84; M. A. Williams, *Rethinking Gnosticism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996). It must be noted that certain Christian Gnostic books make reference to Paul's teaching (e.g., Spirit vs. flesh, body metaphors, rulers of darkness, call, visions), e.g., *Interp. Know.* 18.25–38 (1 Cor 12:14ff.); *Exeg. Soul* 131.2–13 (1 Cor 5:9f.; Eph 6:12); *Pr. Paul* 25–30 (1 Cor 2:9); *Hyp. Arch.* 86.21–26 (Col 1:13; Eph 6:12); *Apoc. Paul* 18.15–23 (Gal 1:11-17), 20.1–22.33 (2 Cor 12:2-4); see also Elaine Pagels, *Gnostic Paul* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975).

claims (e.g., *Gospel of Truth* 42.266–34). The apostle seems to address Gnostics as perfect ones (teleioi, Phil 3:15) in stressing Christian perfection as a future goal to attain rather than a present reality already experienced. His address to the perfect ones that "God shall *reveal* even this to you" (v. 15) even sounds like a sarcastic parody of Gnostic revealed knowledge (e.g. *Seth* 50.22–25; *On the Origin of the World* 127.6–17).

Paul's denouncement of his opponents as "enemies of the cross" (Phil 3:18) seems applicable to Gnostics who despised the doctrine of the cross (e.g., *Apoc Pet* 74.14–15) and denied that Jesus actually died on it (*Apoc Pet* 81.17–24). The harangues about those whose "their god is the belly; and their glory is in their shame; their minds are set on earthly things" (Phil 3:19) may refer to the immoral lifestyle of libertine Gnostics (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 1.6.2–3; Epiphanius, *Panarion* 25–26). The reference to awaiting the parousia of the Lord Jesus (Phil 3:20) appears to counter the realized eschatology of Gnosticism (*Gospel of Thomas*, sayings 51, 113). Paul's hope for the transformation of our humble bodies into ones glorified like Christ's (Phil 3:21) seems anti-Gnostic. The human body and the material world had no place in the redemptive scheme of Gnosticism (e.g., *Exegesis on the Soul* 134.7–30; *Gospel of Philip* 59, 29–34).

Yet the problem with a Gnostic reconstruction of the opponents is that we have here scattered allusions that are purported to be Gnostic identifying markers, making it difficult to draw any responsible inference from the data. If asceticism or libertinism are in view, Gnosticism could be cited as the background, even though for the same behaviors there are more plausible cultural and philosophical explanations from the Greco-Roman world.[8] If a different sort of knowledge seems to be in evidence, Gnosticism could be cited, even though anyone who disagreed with Paul would claim to "know" something that Paul did not "know." If a different eschatology is in view, especially a *realized* eschatology, Gnosticism could be cited, even though the primary advocate for realized eschatology in the time of Paul's letter writing was the Roman Empire, whose propagandists, such as Virgil in the reign

[8] See "Impurity among the Nations" in Elliott and Reasoner, *Documents and Images*, 250–60, and "The Censure of Sexual Immorality," ibid., 260–65. For a helpful survey of discussion, see Jerry L. Sumney, "Studying Paul's Opponents: Advances and Challenges," *Paul and His Opponents*, ed., Stanley E. Porter (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 25–29.

of Augustus and Calpurnius Siculus in the reign of Nero, depicted the Principate as a golden age of plenty for the world.[9]

Who were the opponents in Philippians 3:2–4:3? From the data in the text, it is most likely that the "dogs" in the first part of chapter 3 refer to a Judaizing element who could be threatening the church in Philippi (cf. Phil 3:1-11). Near the end of the chapter, "the enemies of the cross of Christ . . . their god is the belly" probably refers to the dominant Roman ethos of pleasure-seeking consumption, viewed as a right of Roman citizenship (cf. Phil 3:18-21).

Philippians 2:6-11: A Survey of Interpretation

A recent development in the study of Philippians has been to regard Philippians 2:6-11 as a poem or hymn that first-century Christians sang in their worship. In this approach, Philippians 2:6-11 is called the "Christ hymn." Paul is viewed as pasting this hymn into his letter or, more speculatively, editing the hymn as he adds it to the letter. The debate on the origin of this section is not inconsequential, since sometimes its contribution to Paul's argument can be minimized when it is viewed simply as a familiar hymn that Paul inserted at this point in his letter.

Charles Cosgrove has recently pointed out that the evidence for viewing this material as a preexistent hymn is weak.[10] Cosgrove gives persuasive counterexamples that prove that Eduard Norden's criteria for identifying poetic or hymnic fragments simply are unreliable, and therefore cannot carry the credibility that Lohmeyer gave these criteria.[11] Cosgrove also observes that Ralph Martin is incorrect in using

[9] Virgil's *Aeneid* 6, 788–807, 847, 851–53; Calpurnius Siculus, *Ecologues*, 1, 37–38, cited in Elliott and Reasoner, *Documents and Images for the Study of Paul*, 122–23 (Virgil), 147–48 (Calpurnius Siculus). Peter T. O'Brien provides a critical overview of several influential interpretations of Paul's alleged "opponents and false teachers," Judaizing and Gnostic, in *The Epistle to the Philippians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991), 26–35.

[10] Charles H. Cosgrove, "The Question of Hymns in the New Testament: Before and after Lohmeyer," paper read at the Chicago Society of Biblical Research meeting, March 31, 2012, at the Catholic Theological Union, Chicago. Fee regards the many different reconstructions of a pre-Pauline hymn here to be futile and without consensus, *Philippians* (1995), 191–97.

[11] Eduard Norden, *Agnostos Theos: Untersuchungen zur Formsgeschichte religiöser Rede* (Berlin: Teubner, 1913); Ernst Lohmeyer, *Kyrios Jesus: eine Untersuchung zu Phil. 2, 5–11* (Heidelberg: C. Winter, 1928).

Johannes Weiss as support for the hypothesis that Philippians 2:6-11 is a hymn, since Weiss only said that this section of Philippians fits with Paul's style in its most artful moments. Weiss did not claim it was poetry or a hymn.[12] We are therefore taking the route of more responsible scholarship to note evidence for and against both its poetic and pre-Pauline origin. Our position follows recent work on this passage that more cautiously labels it epideictic praise in elevated Pauline prose.[13]

There is no repetition here that the Pauline corpus sometimes uses to signal quoted material.[14] Nor is there an introductory formula, such as Ephesians uses to introduce poetic material.[15]

The theme of the descent of Christ into the world, his suffering, death, return to the Father, and exaltation has parallels in Gnostic literature (*Apoc. Adam; Treat. Res.; Gos. Thom.*).[16] Such comparisons have provided a pretext for some interpreters to view this section of Philippians (e.g., 2:6-11) as dependent on or participating in a similar Gnostic worldview, including a so-called Gnostic redeemer myth. Dating problems still persist with this scenario. Extant Gnostic material is later than the New Testament texts and some are obviously dependent on the New Testament. Pheme Perkins, nevertheless, makes a case for a first-century, non-Christian Gnostic strand (Sethian, first century) on a trajectory from earlier syncretistic (or heterodox) forms of Judaism

[12] Johannes Weiss, "Beiträge zur Paulinischen Rhetorik," in Caspar René Gregory et al., *Theologische Studien: Bernhard Weiss zu seinem* 70. *Geburtstage dargebracht* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1897), 165–247; cf. Ralph Martin, *Carmen Christi: Philippians ii 5–11* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1983).

[13] Ralph Brucker, *"Christushymnen" oder "epideiktische Passagen"? Studien zum Stilwechsel im Neuen Testament und seiner Umwelt* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1997), cited by Cosgrove, "The Question of Hymns in the New Testament."

[14] 1 Cor 6:12; 10:23.

[15] Eph 4:8; 5:14.

[16] Descent (*Mandean Liturgies*, 196–197; *Steles Seth* 59, 17–29; *Apoc Adam* 77.27–82.19; 2nd century, *Ascen. Isa.* 10.17–30); appearance in the form of a human (*Gos. Thom.* 28; *Gos. Truth* 31.4–8; *Ascen. Isa.* 11:1–18; *Treat. Res.* 44, 14–20); suffering and death (*Gos. Truth* 20, 10–14, 20, 23–21, 2; *Ascen. Isa.* 11.19–20); return to the Father and exaltation (*Treat. Res.* 45.15–39; 2nd., *Odes Sol.* 41.12; *Ascen. Isaiah* 11:22–32; *Apoc. Jas* 15.15–24). The evidence for a so-called Gnostic redeemer myth in the first century remains problematic; see Pheme Perkins, "Gnosticism," *NIDB* 2:573.

(first–second century BCE) to the later Valentinianism of the second–third century CE. Rather than positing direct influences upon the NT, she sees all of the above drawing upon a common lexicon of images.[17] There are more generic parallels from the broader Greek, Jewish, and Roman world (e.g., in Virgil, Ovid, Plutarch), but most reflect a Hellenistic view of divinized heroes from sources (again) later than first century CE.[18]

Joseph Hellerman looks at the Christ hymn from a first-century social and cultural perspective.[19] His approach has some merit. The first stanza (Phil 2:6-8) begins with the course of honor (*cursus honorum*), the norm of upward mobility followed by a Roman aristocrat in his career. Hellerman argues that Paul deconstructs these Roman norms for his early Christian readers. He detects three levels of degradation in the hymn: Jesus did not regard his divine status as something to be exploited (v. 6), he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave (v. 7), and he humbled himself, submitting to death on the cross (v. 8). In stanza 2 (vv. 9-11), God acts to exalt Jesus, restoring his divine status, naming Jesus as "Lord" (Gk. *Kyrios)*, not the emperor. Paul's Christian readers are expected to follow this course of humility that Christ undertook (v. 5).[20]

[17] Perkins, *Gnosticism and the New Testament* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 9–26. Certain NT texts and Sethian strands of Gnosticism (*Apoc. Adam; Hyp. Arch.; Steles Seth*) appear to draw upon a common lexical tradition in (mostly) earlier Jewish notions of personified wisdom, semidivine beings, angels, and other mediators from heaven (e.g., Prov 8; Sir 24; Wis 8–9; Dan 7:13-14; 1 Enoch 49:3; 51:3; 4 Ezra 5; *Ascen. Isa*. 10–11; *Odes Sol*. 41; 2 Bar 48; *T. Abr*. 7:3–12; 9:17–18; *Jos. Asen*. 14–17); Larry Hurtado makes use of this data on Jewish divine mediators (sent by YHWH) to argue by analogy for early instances of high Christology in the NT, *One God, One Lord* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 18–22. On non-Christian Barbeloites and Jewish sources of Gnosticism, see John D. Turner, *Sethian Gnosticism* (Louvain, 2001). See also the caution expressed here by Michael A. Williams, "Sethianism," in Marjean and Luomanen, *Second-Century*, 50–57.

[18] See *Documents for the Study of the Gospels*, ed. Cartlidge and Dungan, 2nd. ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994), 121–298.

[19] *Reconstructing Honor in Roman Philippi*: *Carmen Christi as Cursos Pudorum* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); see also summary and chart in Wallace F. Taylor, *Paul: Apostle to the Nations, An Introduction* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012), 267–71.

[20] Bruce W. Winter makes similar observations on the position of low status that Christ assumes in the hymn, *Seek the Welfare of the City: Christians as Benefactors and Citizens* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994), 99–100.

Susan Eastman seeks to move beyond the christological or kerygmatic focus on the hymn to highlight the ethical or Lordly example the readers are expected to follow.[21] The "drama of Christ's redemptive participation in human existence . . . in turn empowers transformed behavior among the Philippians" (p. 3). She continues, that this

> call to imitate Christ, which in turn displays a reverse-mimetic movement in which Christ plays the role of enslaved and condemned humanity on the stage of human history . . . evokes a mimetic response in its auditors. . . . As they hear, visualize, and perhaps even sing the dramatic narrative, the Philippians are also caught up into the drama of salvation. In this way, the priority of Christians' participation in Christ brings together the kerygmatic and ethical aspects of Phil 2:6-11. (pp. 3–4)

Eastman cites Michael Gorman's notion of "co-crucifixion with Christ" to further illustrate her emphasis on participation in Christ, although she admits that his interpretation of Christ in the hymn differs from her own.[22]

In general, her study is careful to include the kerygmatic with the ethical in Paul, because the latter develops from the former. In conclusion, Eastman's focus may help to guide the interpretation of this text out of its form-critical impasse.

A Composite Letter

The suggestion that Philippians is a composite letter came to prominence in the early twentieth century with continued support in the academy. If 2 Corinthians is comprised of two to four letters, then it is not incredible to conceive of Philippians as a composite of several

[21] Susan Grove Eastman, "Philippians 2:6-11: Incarnation as Mimetic Participation," *JSPL* 1, no. 1 (Spring 2011): 1–22. For the kerygmatic position Eastman lists Ernest Käsemann and Ralph Martin. The following, according to Eastman, focus on the example of Christ to follow (Phil 2:5): Larry Hurtado, William Kurz, Wayne Meeks, and Steven Fowl (p. 2, n. 6).

[22] Eastman, ibid., 4. For Gorman, God exalts Christ's suffering-servant behavior as the divine Lord that makes their (our) worship of Jesus "perfectly appropriate." *Inhabiting the Cruciform God* (2009), 30.

letter fragments. Polycarp in his *Letter to the Philippians* even suggests it when he mentions that Paul "wrote letters" to the Philippians (*Pol Phil* 3.2).

There are at least three internal reasons for viewing Philippians as a composite letter. (1) There is an abrupt change from 3:1 to 3:2, introducing a polemical section of 3:2–4:3, whose tone is notably different from the rest of the letter. (2) Verses 3:1 and 4:4 fit together so well that it seems they were secondarily separated. (3) Why would Paul wait until the very end of the letter (4:10-20) to thank the Philippians for their gift of support? Those who attempt to address these problems in defense of the letter's original unity usually resort to questionable psychological explanations (e.g., sudden despondency in prison, forgetfulness) or indefensible suggestions (e.g., belated stimulus from Timothy, the arrival of new reports). We have no parallels like the above in any single letter of Paul.[23] The fragments were probably combined shortly after Paul wrote them by an associate to better accommodate oral reading in congregations. We therefore favor the idea that Philippians was originally comprised of three separate letters, which will be outlined below with annotations.

Occasion 1	*Letter A*	*Structure*
Paul (imprisoned in Ephesus? 4:14) receives a gift from the Philippi community via their "apostle" Epaphroditus (2:25), ca. 54 CE.	Paul thanks Philippians for their gift.	Prescript (lost or removed) Body (4:1-20) Closing (4:21-23)

[23] Even our argument for the unity of 2 Corinthians 1–9 presupposes that it is a composite of three letter fragments (1–7; 8; 9) hastily combined by the apostle in Macedonia around 56 CE (see our chap. 5, "Paul's Corinthian Correspondence"). For two different positions on the question, cf. Gerald F. Hawthorne, *Philippians*, WBC (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1987), xxi–xxii, who favors the unity of the letter in its canonical form, and Walter Schmithals, *Paul and the Gnostics* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1972), 67–81, who favors the composite origin of the canonical letter. Cousar lays out the arguments for the fragmentarian view but sees fewer difficulties with the "unitarian" one; *Philippians and Philemon* (WJK, 2009), 7–9.

Occasion 2	*Letter B*	*Structure*
Epaphroditus ill (2:25-30); Paul, still imprisoned in Ephesus, hears of divisions and adversaries in Philippi (1:27-30) in ca. 55 CE.	Paul's second letter, shortly before Corinthian correspondence	Prescript (1:1-2) Thanksgiving (1:3-11) Body (1:12–3:1; 4:4-7) Closing (4:8-9 or removed)
Occasion 3	*Letter C*	*Structure*
Occasion 2 escalates; Epaphroditus returns to Philippi; Paul plans to send Timothy and to visit himself (1:26; 2:19-30; ca 55 CE).	Paul repeats directions for unity in face of divisions and opposition, more urgently than previously.	Structure Prescript (lost or removed) Body (3:2–4:3) Closing (4:8-9 or removed)

Rhetorical Structure of Philippians

Following Ben Witherington's rhetorical outline, which (he believes) supports the original unity of the letter,[24] we have the following:

1. Epistolary prescript, 1:1-2
2. Exordium: Prayers and Previews, 1:3-11
3. Narratio: Proclamation's Progress, 1:12-26
4. Propositio: Lives Worthy of the Word, 1:27-30
5. Probatio: Four Positive Appeals, 2:1–4:3
6. Peroratio: Virtue and Joy, 4:4-9
7. Conclusio: Giving and Receiving, 4:10-20
8. Epistolary Greetings and Closings, 4:21-23

The letter in its combined form is deliberative (advisory) in tone with epideictic or demonstrative elements (Phil 2:6-11; 3:3-11). It

[24] Witherington, *Philippians*, 12, 15–16 (on original unity), 21–30 (rhetoric). Duane F. Watson also agrees that it is mostly deliberative rhetoric but outlines it: exordium (1:3-26), narratio (1:27-30), confirmatio (2:1–3:21), and peroratio (4:1-20). "A Rhetorical Analysis of Philippians and Its Implications for the Unity Question," *NovT* 30 (1988): 57–88.

exhorts and advises the Philippians to lead lives worthy of the gospel (1:27) and to live peaceably with each other (2:1-4; 4:4-9), as exemplified by Paul (1:12-26; 3:17) and Christ (2:5-11), and to avoid those who would bring harm or division (3:2, 18-19).[25]

The Date and Place of Composition

The question of dates and location of composition are related issues for both Philippians and Philemon. The dates are dependent on the following locations for the writing of Paul's prison letter: Caesarea (57–58 CE), Rome (60–61 CE), or Ephesus (54–55 CE).[26]

We will first examine the evidence from Philippians and Philemon before comparing it with the data on the three locations. (1) Paul was in prison when he wrote these letters (Phil 1:7, 13, 17; Phlm 1, 9–10, 13). (2) He faced a trial that could end in his death (Phil 1:19-20; 2:17) or acquittal (1:25; 2:24; Phlm 22). (3) Wherever the location was there was a Roman praetorian guard (1:13) and "those who belonged to Caesar's household" had knowledge of Paul's situation (Phil 4:22). (4) Timothy was with Paul (Phil 1:1; 2:19-23; Phlm 1). (5) Evangelizing efforts were going on around Paul at that time (1:14-17). (6) The apostle planned to visit Philippi if he was acquitted (2:24). (7) A plurality of trips were made to Philippi from where he wrote: (a) news came to them concerning Paul's arrest, (b) they sent Epaphroditus to Paul with a gift, (c) news about Epaphroditus came back to Philippi, (d) word reached Paul that they were greatly concerned about Epaphroditus, and (e) the apostle hoped to send Timothy back to them and receive encouragement from him before Paul himself set off for Philippi (2:19, 24).[27]

A comparison of the above data with the three localities provides the following observations:

[25] The collective identity and sense of belonging in the letter prompt Loveday Alexander to notice similarities with letters from one family member writing to the rest of the family, in "Hellenistic Letter-Forms and the Structure of Philippians," JSNT 37 (1989): 87–101. See also Reidar Aasgaard, *My Beloved Brothers and Sisters: Christian Siblingship in Paul* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 309–11.

[26] The dates are based on our conclusions in chapter 3 on Pauline chronology.

[27] These seven points are derived from Hawthorne, *Philippians*, xxxvii. The data from Colossians and Ephesians will be discussed in a separate chapter.

1. There is explicit mention in a secondary source of Paul's imprisonments in Caesarea (Acts 24:23, 27) and Rome (Acts 28:16, 30-31; see 1 Clement 5:7; Eusebius *Eccl. Hist.* 2.22). From two of Paul's own letters there are probably allusions to an Ephesian imprisonment (1 Cor 15:32; see also Ign Romans 5.1 and especially 2 Cor 1:8-10) and the possibility of more than two imprisonments (2 Cor 11:23-25; see 1 Clement 5:6).
2. The prospect of a trial that would result in death or acquittal might be deduced from Acts concerning the Caesarean and Roman detentions. However, 2 Corinthians 11 and 1 Clement 5 imply more than two life-threatening trials and 2 Corinthians 1:8-10 seems to indicate a life-threatening detention specifically in Asia.
3. The praetorium more frequently denotes the imperial guards stationed throughout the provinces and is not necessarily restricted to Rome.[28] "Those of Caesar's household" could refer either to the highest officials in Roman government or the lowest servants in the emperor's household.[29] As a result, the allusions could point to Ephesus, Caesarea, or Rome.
4. From Paul's undisputed letters, we learn that Timothy was with Paul in Ephesus at the writing of 1 Corinthians (1 Cor 4:17; 16:10). From the secondary source of Acts we have one reference that Timothy accompanied him to Jerusalem (Acts 20:4). One can only deduce from this single reference that Timothy was possibly with Paul in Caesarea (Acts 24) and Rome (Acts 28).
5. Acts 19 presents a picture of busy evangelistic activity in Ephesus. Acts 21:8-10 alludes to the work of Philip the evangelist with his

[28] J. B. Lightfoot, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians* (London: Macmillan, 1913), 99–104. Witherington notes, however, that there is no evidence of a praetorium guard of about 9,000 troops stationed in the senatorial province of Ephesus, in his *Philippians*, 10, 79. Charles B. Cousar favors Ephesus as the place of writing, ca. 52–55 CE, and says the size and importance of Ephesus would necessitate a praetorian guard and imperial civil servants from "Caesar's household," in his *Philippians and Philemon*, 10–11.

[29] Lightfoot, *Philippians*, 171–78. Combining both references to bolster Roman provenance, Witherington regards "Caesar's household" as bureaucrats, mostly freedman, in the imperial service who worked with "the praetorium guard," *Philippians*, 10.

daughters in Caesarea. Acts 28 refers to other Christians at Rome (v. 15) and Paul's liberty to preach while under house arrest (vv. 30-31).

6. Second Corinthians 1:16; 2:13; 7:5; and Acts 20:1-2 each mention Paul's subsequent travel through Macedonia after his ministry (and detention) in Ephesus. There is no evidence of Paul's returning to Macedonia after his Caesarean or Roman imprisonment.
7. Although sea and road travel had greatly improved in the Roman provinces in the Principate, Ephesus is the closest and best location to explain the four or five trips presupposed in the Philippian correspondence.

Because points 4–7 argue favorably for it and points 1–3 support it as well as any other location, we favor Ephesus as the place of imprisonment from which Paul wrote Philippians and Philemon. Ephesus is also the most probable city toward which a runaway slave from nearby Colossae (i.e., Onesimus) would flee. Furthermore, if Paul were imprisoned in Rome or Caesarea, he would scarcely have entertained the prospect of a visit to distant Colossae in the immediate future (Phlm 22). The Ephesian origin would place the date of both Philippians and Philmon around 55 CE.[30]

Philemon

The letter to Philemon is the shortest of Paul's letters that we encounter in our canon, consisting of 335 words. From our chapter on the letters of antiquity, we noted that Philemon shares more characteristics with the personal correspondence of Hellenistic Egypt (e.g., letters of request and recommendations) than any other in the New Testament.

[30] Paul's Ephesian imprisonment of 55 CE provides an even longer time frame for Paul's three letters to the Philippians than would the Macedonian setting of 56 for the last of Paul's Corinthian correspondence (2 Cor 1–7; 8; 9). Ralph P. Martin supports Ephesian provenance in his *Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon* (WJK, 1992), 97, especially 138. Stephen R. Llewelyn argues for Ephesian origin based on Paul's proximity to Philemon in Colossae and the relatively short distance traveled by runaway slaves, in Llewelyn, ed., *New Documents* 8 (1984–85), 44–45. Charles B. Cousar also favors Ephesus as the place of writing, ca. 52–55 CE, in his *Philippians and Philemon*, 10–11.

John Knox stated that Philemon was a letter to a church embodied in a letter to an individual. He also believed that it was included in the New Testament canon because of the influence of Onesimus, the runaway slave in Philemon who later became bishop of Ephesus (Ign. *Eph* 1.3; 2.1; 6.2).[31] In this section, we will examine the occasion, genre, and rhetorical structure of Philemon.

The Occasion

The occasion of the letter may be inferred from its contents. A slave named Onesimus had wronged his owner Philemon, a Christian living at Colossae (cf. the names in vv. 1–2 with Col 4:9, 17), and had run away. Somehow Onesimus had come into contact with Paul, either as a fellow prisoner or because he had sought refuge with the apostle's associates (a parallel provision in Athenian law may be illuminative here). It appears that Onesimus had vandalized or stolen property and departed precipitously (Phlm 18). Roman law required that whoever gave hospitality to a runaway slave was liable to his master. This law may explain Paul's promise to pay back the amount Onesimus owed to his master (Phlm 19). The primary purpose of the letter, therefore, is to ensure that Philemon will receive back the delinquent slave, although Paul may be hoping that Onesimus be returned to him (Phlm 12–14, 21).

To show forgiveness to a criminal slave was a revolutionary act in contrast to the expected treatment of imprisonment, flogging, or crucifixion. Even though Paul does not explicitly request the slave's emancipation, verse 16 can be read as a stimulus for the eventual prohibition of slavery. When Paul's phrase, *hyper doulon*, is translated as "more than a slave," this is surely the direction the exegesis leads.[32] If, however, we would translate the phrase in verse 16 as a "hyper-slave,"

[31] John Knox, *Philemon among the Letters of Paul: A New View of Its Place and Importance*, 1935, rev. ed. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1959). Murphy-O'Connor adopts this view and suggests that Onesimus is responsible for the *complete* collection of Paul's letters, *Paul the Letter-Writer* (1995), 130.

[32] Here we begin with Giorgio Agamben's suggestion of translating the phrase in Philemon 16 as "super-slave, beyond-slave," and, as a consequence of the messianic event, "slave of the Messiah" (1 Cor 7:20-23), *The Time That Remains: A Commentary on the Letter to the Romans* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), 13.

Paul may simply be saying that Onesimus is now a slave two or three times over to Philemon (or Archippus, if one follows Knox's idea that Archippus is the owner), to Christ, and to Paul.[33]

The Genre

Paul employs the conventional letter writing format in Philemon. For example, a comparison of Paul's letter with that of Apion the soldier to his father Epimachus will establish this point. Extensive comparisons have also been made between Philemon and numerous papyri letters.[34]

The type of appeal made in Philemon has parallels in late antiquity. A good illustration of a plea for clemency on humanitarian grounds is seen in the younger Pliny's letters to Sabinianus (*Epistles* 9.21, 24).[35] He intercedes for a young freed man who sought refuge in Pliny's home and is full of fear at the prospect of his master's wrath. Pliny grants the master's right to be angry but tries to steer Sabinianus in the direction of clemency because of the deserter's repentance, amendment of life, and his own request to be forgiven. From the second letter (9.24) it appears that Pliny's intercession was successful.

The Rhetorical Structure

Paul also appears to use the basic techniques of persuasion widely practiced in his day. A rhetorical analysis of Philemon, consulting the handbooks of Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian, will verify this obser-

[33] John Knox understands the letter sent to Laodicea mentioned in Col 4:16 to be the canonical letter of Philemon. Knox then takes Col 4:17 as referring to Paul's charge of welcoming and freeing Onesimus, and thus he considers Archippus the owner of Onesimus, *Philemon among the Letters of Paul*, 56–70. Moo examines but refutes Knox's ingenius theories, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008), 351, and 374, nn. 31–34.

[34] See our discussion in "Basic Characteristics of Ancient Letters" section in chap. 2, pp. 31–32. See also John White, "The Structural Analysis of Philemon" (Scholars Press, 1971) 1–47; Chan-Hie Kim, *Form and Structure of the Familiar Greek Letter of Recommendation* (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press 1972). On two letters of Apion, see Hans-Josef Klauck, *Ancient Letters and the NT* (Waco, TX: Baylor, 2006), 9–27.

[35] Pliny the Younger, *Letters and Panegyricus*, 2 vols., trans. B. Radice, LCL 2 (1975), 119–21, 126–27. See also Klauck, *Ancient Letters*, 77, 450.

vation.[36] As in deliberative rhetoric, Paul is concerned with influencing a decision in the future concerning Onesimus that is fair, honorable, and beneficial for the whole community.

The Rhetorical Structure of Philemon

Epistolary Prescript		vv. 1-3
	A. Senders	1a
	B. Recipients	1b-2
	C. Greeting	3
I.	Exordium or Introduction	vv. 4-7
	A. Paul secures the good will of Philemon (*captatio benevolentiae*)	4
	B. Paul praises Philemon for those qualities upon which the outcome of the case depends (love; fellowship of dependability)	5-7
II.	Confirmatio or Proof	vv. 8-16
	A. Appeals to Paul's apostolic authority (ethos) and Philemon's compassion (pathos)	8-10
	B. Appeal to utility: Onesimus is useful	11
	C. Paul substitutes himself for Onesimus, the offending runaway slave	12
	D. Paul's appeal to his own wishes and cooperation of owner	13-14a
	E. Appeal to honor: owner Philemon has opportunity for good deed	14b
III.	Peroratio or Reiteration of Argument	vv. 17-22
	A. Restates request with pathos	17
	B. Amplifies argument	18-19
	1. Paul offers restitution	18-19a
	2. Paul calls in Philemon's debt	19b
	C. Invocation of spiritual pathos	20
	D. Portrait of Philemon's positive response	21-22
IV.	Epistolary Postscript	vv. 23-25
	A. Greetings from Paul's partners	23-24
	B. Benediction	25

[36] Our rhetorical outline is adapted from F. F. Church, "Rhetorical Structure and Design in Paul's Letter to Philemon," *HTR* 71 (1/2, 1978): 17–33. Witherington follows a similar outline for Philemon in *The Letters to Philemon, the Colossians, and the Ephesians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007), 19.

Unlike Pliny's letter to Sabinianus, Philemon is not simply an appeal for clemency. It also offers instruction for Philemon and his associates on the outworking of Christian love. Although the letter is addressed to Philemon, Apphia, Archippus, and their house church are also included. The tradition that this Onesimus is the one who later became bishop and was responsible for the preservation of this letter cannot be proven.[37]

This very specific, occasional letter ostensibly written to a slave owner about a runaway slave has the rhetorical effect of forcing readers to take a stand on the controversial question of returning runaway slaves to owners. The letter has been used both by social conservatives advocating the maintenance of slavery and by abolitionists.[38]

Recent research seeks to steer the exegesis away from the assumption that Philemon deals with a runaway slave. Allen Dwight Callahan argues instead that Philemon and Onesimus were biological brothers. After Onesimus left in the wake of a heated argument between them, Paul seeks in this letter to bring reconciliation between the brothers.[39] Craig S. Wansink suggests that Onesimus, like Epaphroditus in Philippians 2:25, was sent to help Paul survive in prison. Paul is writing Philemon to release Onesimus to him for a longer time (Phlm 13–14).[40] Witherington, nevertheless, maintains that Philemon 15–16 and the use of *doulos* in Colossians and Ephesians still favor Onesimus as a runaway slave.[41]

[37] Ignatius addresses Onesimus the bishop of Ephesus with a possible allusion to Philemon 20 in his *Letter to the Ephesians* 2:2. On this basis, John Knox suggests that the bishop addressed must have been the same Onesimus who formed the subject of Paul's letter to Philemon. It is also possible that the bishop of Ephesus was given the name of Paul's famous friend (for another Onesimus known to Melito of Sardis, see Euebius *Eccl. Hist.* 4.26.13–14).

[38] See J. A. Harrill, *Slaves in the New Testament: Literary, Social and Moral Dimensions* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005); Larry E. Tice, *Proslavery: A History of the Defense of Slavery in America 1701–1840* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1987).

[39] *Embassy of Onesimus: The Letter of Paul to Philemon* (TPI, 1997), 51–54, 69–70.

[40] *Chained in Christ: The Experience and Rhetoric of Paul's Imprisonment* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996). John Knox, earlier, had argued that Onesimus was not a *fugitive* slave but a slave sent by his master (Archippus, not Philemon) to assist Paul who wanted Onesimus to remain with him; *Philemon among the Letters of Paul,* 17–18, 24.

[41] Witherington, *Letters to Philemon, the Colossians, and the Ephesians*, 26n.67.

Summary

In this chapter we looked at two of the Prison Epistles of Paul. Philippians is addressed to a church within a Roman colony and military outpost that Paul visited on his first mission trip into Europe (Acts 16; Phil 1–2). After founding a community there he maintained contact with it through messengers, letters, and visits (Acts 19–20; Phil 2; 2 Cor 7:5-6). The opponents against whom Paul warns the Philippians include some who had a Judaizing tendency. Because of a distinctively polemical section (3:2; 4:3) and delayed thanks for the church's gift (4:10-20), we believe that the letter as we encounter it in our Scripture is a composite of what was originally three letters (A. 4:10-23; B. 1:1–3:1; 4:4-9; and C. 3:2–4:3). The letters were probably written by Paul from prison in Ephesus around 54–55 CE and then compiled in a digest form to be used for public reading in churches in Macedonia and beyond.

Philemon, the second Prison Epistle considered in this chapter, is the shortest of Paul's canonical letters. It shares many characteristics with Hellenistic letters of its time. Its contents are similar to the younger Pliny's letter to Sabinianus in which an appeal for clemency is made on behalf of a freedman. Paul's appeal on behalf of Onesimus, a runaway slave, uses the techniques of deliberative rhetoric to instruct Philemon and his community on the practice of Christian love. Within the epistolary format, the letter divides easily into exordium 4–7, securing goodwill and introducing points to be amplified in both the proof of verses 8-10 and the peroration of verses 17-22. In his proof, Paul appeals to the motives of utility, honesty, honor, and God's design, using both ethos and pathos. Paul restates and amplifies his argument in the peroration, using more pathos and securing Philemon's favor.

From a prison in Ephesus, it appears that Paul was still able to carry on an effective letter-writing ministry. The apostle to the nations, who called himself a slave and prisoner of Christ Jesus, capitalized on his imprisonment in order to bring a church into unified Christlikeness and ensure a safe return for a brother in Christ.

CHAPTER 9

The Thessalonian Correspondence

Introduction

The letters to the Thessalonians are considered by many to be the earliest Christian writings. They reveal some of the problems and aspirations of a young church. First Thessalonians, for example, is thought to have been written within twenty years of Jesus' ministry, shortly after Paul's founding of a community in Thessalonica, Macedonia (Acts 17; 1 Thess 1:4-10; 2:9-13).

Despite the importance of these letters, difficulties arise when the two are compared and contrasted. How do we explain the close similarities and the sharp differences? Many arguments have also been posited against the Pauline authorship of 2 Thessalonians. In response to these problems, several theories have been presented concerning the destination, the chronological order, and editorial arrangement of the letters.

In our survey of 1 and 2 Thessalonians we will first look at background information before examining the documents themselves. The background data consist of discussions on the city of Thessalonica, Paul's relationship to the church there, and the problems of the Thessalonian church. In our examination of the documents, we will deal with questions of authorship, destination, date, literary character, and rhetorical function.[1]

[1] Commentaries consulted in this study are: Ernest Best, *The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians* (London: Black, 1972); F. F. Bruce, *1 and* 2 *Thessalonians*, WBC (Dallas: Word Books, 1982); J. Frame, *Epistles of Paul to the Thessalonians*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1912); I. H. Marshall, *1 and* 2 *Thessalonians*, NCBC (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1983); C. A. Wanamaker, *The Epistles to the Thessalonians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990); D. J. Williams, *1 and* 2 *Thessalonians*, NIBCNT (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1992); Earl J. Richard, *First and Second Thes-*

The City of Thessalonica

Unlike most cities that Paul visited, Thessalonica still exists as the modern Salonika. It also had a long history prior to Paul.[2] Its location is at the head of the Thermaic Gulf where once stood the ancient town of Therme (Strabo, *Geogr*. 7 frags. 21, 24). The city was founded by Cassander, a general of Alexander the Great (316 BCE). He named the city "Thessalonica" after his wife, the daughter of Philip II and half-sister of Alexander (Diodorus Siculus, *Hist. Libr*. 19.52.1). After a history of conflict and exploitation, Thessalonica came under Roman rule and formed one of four Macedonian districts (167 BCE). Later (146 BCE) the Romans made Macedonia a province with Thessalonica its administrative center. In the first century, the local magistrates were called "politarchs," a title found in both Acts 17:6, 8 and inscriptions from the site (e.g., Vardar Gate of Thessalonica).

The religious context was diverse with the worship of many members of the Greek pantheon (e.g., Zeus, Apollo, Athena, Dionysus), Egyptian deities (Isis, Serapis, Anubis), a local deity (Cabirus of Samothrace), and the Roman imperial cult. Inscriptions from the third century BCE (possibly earlier) also make reference to Jewish synagogues, indicating a sizeable Jewish community by that date.[3]

Thessalonica was not only an administrative center but also a hub for trade, commerce, and religious pilgrims. It was situated on the Roman Via Egnatia, a main traffic artery between Rome and her eastern provinces. Thessalonica also possessed a fine natural harbor on the Thermaic Gulf (now, Gulf of Salonika), receiving ships from Egypt, Asia, and Rome.

---

salonians (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2007); Ben Witherington III, *1 and 2 Thessalonians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006); Gene L. Green, *The Letters to the Thessalonians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002); Gordon D. Fee, *The First and Second Letters to the Thessalonians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009). Special studies will be mentioned under the appropriate topics. Readers may also wish to consult Beverly Roberts Gaventa, *First and Second Thessalonians* (WJK, 1998), and Michael W. Holmes, *1 and 2 Thessalonians: The NIV Application Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1998).

[2] For helpful discussion on Thessalonica, see Green, *Thessalonians*, 1–24.

[3] *Inscriptiones Thessalonicae et Viciniae*, ed. Charles F. Edson (Berlin, 1972), cited in Green, *Thessalonians*, 31–47.

Fig. 16: Modern harbor of Salonika, major seaport. Image by C. Koester.

The Church at Thessalonica

Our main sources for Paul's founding of a church at Thessalonica are Acts 17:1-10 and 1 Thessalonians. Allusions to "Macedonia" in Acts 19–20 and Paul's letters (1 and 2 Cor, Rom, Phil) assume subsequent visits and contacts with Thessalonica.

According to Acts 17:1-10, Thessalonica was the second European city in which Paul preached. In company with Silas (Silvanus?) and Timothy, Paul crossed the Aegean Sea from Asia. After visiting Philippi and a few small towns, the apostle arrived in Thessalonica (ca. 49 CE). From Acts 17 we can note the following points. First, the church of Thessalonica was composed of Jews and Gentiles associated with the synagogue (vv. 2, 4). Second, Paul's preaching about Jesus as the Messiah who suffered and rose from the dead (vv. 2-3) was misinterpreted to mean the announcement of a new ruler in opposition to the Roman emperor (v. 7). Third, the persecution that ended Paul's three-week visit (v. 2) was caused by the Jews (vv. 5-6). Fourth, Paul left for Athens waiting for his associates who later rejoined him in Corinth (Acts 17:14-16; 18:1, 5).

The allusions in 1 Thessalonians suggest a situation somewhat different from Acts. First, the addressees of 1 Thessalonians are converts

from paganism, not Judaism (1:9). There is little evidence of a Jewish community in 1 Thessalonians (except 2:14-16). Second, if 1 Thessalonians was written shortly after Paul's first visit (the majority opinion), a period longer than three weeks (Acts 17:2, 10) is presupposed. The considerable follow-up ministry (l Thess 2:9-12) and strong affection shown to the Thessalonians (2:8; 3:6-10) imply a stay of months, rather than weeks. Third, there is no indication in 1 Thessalonians that persecution was instigated by Jews. The reference in 1 Thessalonians 2:14-16, probably an interpolation,[4] compares the situation of the Thessalonians to believers in Judea who suffered from the Jews. Fourth, according to 1 Thessalonians 3:1-2, Paul was willing to be left behind in Athens while Timothy was sent back to Thessalonica. In Acts, neither Timothy nor Silas were with Paul in Athens but rejoined him later in Corinth (Acts 17:14-16; 18:5).

Two explanations can be given for the discrepancies between Acts 17 and 1 Thessalonians. (1) Either the account of Acts gives an incomplete picture or one that is presupposed but unmentioned in 1 Thessalonians. (2) The discrepancies are due to special Lukan concerns at least a generation after Paul.[5] For example, the mention of Jewish opponents was to show the Romans that Christianity was a harmless religion persecuted by the Jews and possibly to make the synagogue instead of the church the object of Roman consternation. This latter explanation seems more plausible and less naively harmonistic.

In agreement with 1 Thessalonians, however, Acts provides the following information. First, Paul's visit to Thessalonica had been preceded by a trip to Philippi, where they were "shamefully treated" (1 Thess 2:2; Acts 16:19-24). Second, Paul's stay in Thessalonica was

[4] Birger Pearson, "I Thess 2:13-16: A Deutero-Pauline Interpolation," *HTR* 64 (1971): 79–94. Earl Richard concedes that the thanksgiving in v. 13 might be Pauline but maintains that vv. 14-16 are post-Pauline because of its contrast with the rest of the letter (e.g., nowhere else is Jewish persecution mentioned) and Rom 9–11 (still hopeful of Israel's salvation), in Richard, *Thessalonians*, 119–27.

[5] We are assuming here that Luke and Acts were written after Paul's death. The author appears to be a third-generation Christian (Luke 1:1-4) and not a companion of Paul's. For further discussion, see W. G. Kümmel, *Introduction to the New Testament*, rev. ed., trans. H. C. Kee (Nashville: Abingdon, 1975), 150–51, 185–87, and Richard I. Pervo, *Dating Acts*, 309–46; Richard, *Thessalonians*, 4–6.

attended by trouble and the persecution of converts (1 Thess 1:6; possibly 2:14; Acts 17:5-9). Third, after leaving Thessalonica Paul went to Athens (1 Thess 3:1; Acts 17:14-16). Fourth, Paul writes to the Thessalonians when he is rejoined by Timothy and Silas/Silvanus (1 Thess 1:1; 3:6), which is probably in Corinth (Acts 18:1, 5). It is at this time (50 CE) that Paul probably wrote 1 Thessalonians. Some argue that 2 Thessalonians was written shortly afterward.[6]

Paul's continuing relations with Macedonia, which probably included Thessalonica, are alluded to in Acts 19–20 and also in Paul's Philippian, Corinthian, and Roman correspondences. From these references it appears that all was well. Paul commends them for their fidelity under persecution and their generous giving (Rom 15:26; 2 Cor 8:1-5). Toward the end of Paul's Ephesian ministry (55 CE) he planned to pass through Macedonia on his way to Corinth (1 Cor 16:5). Both 2 Corinthians 7:5 and Acts 20:1-6 indicate that Paul revisited Macedonia (56 CE) before his final trip to Jerusalem.

Church Problems

Defining the church problems Paul encountered at Thessalonica is a hypothetical enterprise. First, we cannot be sure if Paul's polemical or antithetical statements are occasioned by historical circumstances or are merely stock phrases that distinguish his ministry from others.[7] Second, we cannot be certain that both 1 and 2 Thessalonians reflect similar situations, since the authenticity of 2 Thessalonians is suspect. Nevertheless, we will examine some of the statements in each letter that could have been occasioned by historical circumstances and present our own explanations of the problems.

It appears that the Thessalonian church had undergone some type of "affliction" or "oppression" similar to that experienced by Paul and his associates (*thlipsis* 1:6; 3:3–4, 7). The community also experienced the death of certain members, which troubled them as they awaited the nearness of the Lord's return (4:13-18).[8] Some were possibly doubting the near and sudden return of the Lord (5:1-11).

[6] See commentaries by, e.g., Bruce, Fee, Green, Marshall, and Witherington.

[7] This latter possibility is developed in A. Malherbe, "'Gentle as a Nurse': The Cynic Background of 1 Thess 2," *NovT* 12, no. 2 (1970): 203–17.

[8] Richard Ascough sees Paul here reassuring the Thessalonians that their dead members ("dead in Christ") are still considered part of the living com-

There also seem to have been problems of both sexual immorality (4:3-5) and social irresponsibility (4:11-12; 5:14; cf. 2:9). Perhaps there was even disrespect for Christian leaders (5:12) and some doubts about the credibility of Paul's ministry (2:3-8, 10).

If there were problems of sexual license and social irresponsibility at Thessalonica, this "libertinism" was characteristic of what would later be identified as Gnosticism. Heretical groups later attacked by Irenaeus (second century) and Epiphanius (fourth century); possibly the Nicolaitans and even the opponents in Jude (first century).[9] Gnostics also disclaimed a future parousia by reinterpreting it in a present, spiritual sense (e.g., *Gos. Thom.* 51; 113).[10] It is also noteworthy that the affliction and death of certain members would be especially troubling to spiritual enthusiasts like those encountered by Paul at Corinth (e.g., 2 Cor 10–12).[11] Even if the problems faced by Paul in Thessalonica were merely symptoms of Judaism and Christianity immersed in a pagan environment, it appears to be on some trajectory toward Gnosticism.[12]

---

munity and those "who are alive" can still continue commemorative rituals typical of associations, "A Question of Death: Paul's Building Language in 1 Thess 4:13-18," *JBL* 12 (2004): 509–30.

[9] For sources on libertine Gnosticism see Clement, *Strom.* 3, 7; Irenaeus, *Haer.* 1.6, 2–3; Epiphanius, *Pan.* 25–26; and plausibly Jude 4, 7, 8, 10, 12, 16, 18–19; 2 Pet 2:2, 10, 13–14, 18–19; Rev 2:6, 14–15, 20–22, 24.

[10] See also *Gos. Phil.* 73.1–5; *Treat. Res.* 48.4–7; 49, 10–17; and *Exeg. Soul* 134.7–16. See Schmithals, *Paul and the Gnostics*, trans. John E. Steely (Nashville: Abingdon, 1972), 123–218; and Birger A. Pearson, *Ancient Gnosticism* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007).

[11] This view is developed in R. Jewett, "Enthusiastic Radicalism and the Thessalonian Correspondence," *SBL Proceedings* 1 (1972): 181–232. This type of enthusiastic radicalism may also have been an early form of Gnosticism as Jewett himself notes. See also R. Jewett, *The Thessalonian Correspondence* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986).

[12] The cautious work of Pheme Perkins sees a non-Christian Jewish Gnostic strand (Sethian, Barbeloites) on a trajectory from earlier syncretistic/heterodox forms of Judaism (first century BCE, Enochian) to later Valentinianism of the second century CE, *Gnosticism and the New Testament* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 9–26. She does not argue for a direct influence from this Gnostic trajectory onto the NT but prefers simply to observe how both share a common system or lexicon of mythemes (13). See also John D. Turner, *Sethian Gnosticism* (Louvain: Peters, 2001) and "Sethian Gnosticism," in Hedrick and Hodgson (1986), 55–86.

In 2 Thessalonians, which closely follows 1 Thessalonians, the following situation can be reconstructed. The recipients are designated as those enduring afflictions by unbelievers (1:4-8). They are shaken by the circulation of a pseudonymous letter announcing that the day of the Lord has arrived (2:2). There are those living in idleness who refuse to work for a living (3:6-12).[13] Some also question the authority or credibility of the author of 2 Thessalonians (3:14-15, 17). If the above statements reflect actual problems in the community, it appears to be a type of libertine Gnosticism. There seem to be some in the community who have spiritually experienced a final resurrection that has subsequently freed them from the bondage of this world and all obligations connected with it.[14]

If there are any similarities between the two situations presupposed in 1 and 2 Thessalonians, it is in the area of church problems. The recipients of both letters have experienced (1 Thess) or are experiencing (2 Thess) affliction. The clues for positing an early form of Gnostic heresy in 1 Thessalonians are even more convincing in 2 Thessalonians.

Authorship and Authenticity

1 Thessalonians

The Pauline authorship of 1 Thessalonians is no longer seriously challenged. Its characteristic grammar, spontaneity, and personal style point to Paul as its author. The papyrus manuscripts (p^{46} ca. 200 CE; also p^{30}, p^{61}, p^{65}), every extant canonical list, the oldest versions of the NT, and the patristic citations from the second century onward mention the letter.

2 Thessalonians

The authenticity of 2 Thessalonians is a more questionable matter.[15] Although 2 Thessalonians claims to be written by Paul (1:1; 3:17)

[13] The language here may also presuppose a client-patron relationship (discouraged in the letter) where a client was dependent on a patron to provide for him or her, usually making the client a lobbying sycophant, busybody, and living an idle, albeit dependent life (e.g., Epictetus 3.22.97; Juvenal, *Satires* 5.80, 110–13, 142–45; Peter Garnsey and Richard Saller, *The Roman Empire: Economy, Society and Culture* (London: Duckworth, 1987), 148–59; Witherington, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, 36–44; Green, *Thessalonians*, 26–29.

[14] See also our discussion of Gnosticism at Corinth, chap. 5, p. 96.

[15] See J. Bailey, "Who Wrote 2 Thessalonians?" *NTS* 25 (1979): 131–45; D. Schmidt, "The Authenticity of 2 Thessalonians: Linguistic Argument," *SBL 1983 Seminar Papers* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1983), 289–96; F. Beare,

and has some external and internal evidence to support it, numerous problems challenge this contention. We will look at support for its authenticity before examining its problems.

Arguments for Authenticity. By the second and third centuries, 2 Thessalonians received wide acceptance. For example, it is in one or two early papyri manuscripts (p^{30} ca. 300 CE; prob. p^{46} ca. 200). It is also echoed in Polycarp's *Letter to the Philippians* (ca. 140; 11.3, 2 Thess 1:4; 11.4, 2; Thess 3:15). Furthermore, it is listed in the Muratorian Fragment (second or fourth century) and included with 1 Thessalonians in Marcion's collection (ca. 140). Finally, Irenaeus quoted it by name (ca. 180), and both Clement of Alexandria and Tertullian of Carthage (third century) regarded it as authentic.

Now let us discuss the internal support. Second Thessalonians shares a basic eschatological assumption with Paul's undisputed letters: the end has not yet come. Most of the language and style is also Pauline (e.g., "our gospel," "give thanks," "parousia," so then, "finally," "not anyone," parentheses like 1:10b). Finally, the letter structure of an opening with a lengthy thanksgiving, a body closing with a benediction, and a long parenesis is considered Pauline (e.g., Rom, 1–2 Cor, Phil).

Arguments against Authenticity. Despite the above statements favoring authenticity, there are at least four major arguments against the authenticity of 2 Thessalonians when it is compared with 1 Thessalonians. These four arguments are: 2 Thessalonians is a close imitation of 1 Thessalonians; 1 and 2 Thessalonians have specific eschatological differences; there are distinct changes in mood; and a period of historical and theological development is presupposed in 2 Thessalonians.

The literary and structural parallels are outlined below:[16]

	2 Thess	*1 Thess*
A. Letter Opening	1:1-12	1:1-10
1. Prescript	1:1-2	1:1
2. Thanksgiving	1:3-12	1:2-10
B. Body of Letter	2:1-16	2:1–3:13
1. Second Thanksgiving	2:13	2:13
2. Closing Benediction	2:16	3:11-13

"Thessalonians, Second," *IDB* 4, 626; Raymond F. Collins, *Letters That Paul Did Not Write* (Wilmington, DE: Glazier, 1988); M. J. J. Menkin, *2 Thessalonians* (London: Routledge, 1994).

[16] Bailey, "Who Wrote 2 Thess?" 131–45; R. F. Collins, *Letters That Paul Did Not Write* (1988), 209–40.

C. Parenesis	3:1-15	4:1–5:22
D. Closing of Letter	3:16-18	5:23-25
1. Prayer of Peace	3:16	5:23-25
2. Greetings	3:17	5:26
3. Benediction	3:18	5:28

Second Thessalonians has all the structural features of 1 Thessalonians, although it is hardly more than half as long. No other two Pauline prescripts are so similar (A 1). Both give thanks for the congregation and use similar vocabulary (A 2; e.g., "faith, love, endurance, affliction"). Both include the emphatic "we" in the body (B 1). The fact that 2 Thessalonians contains the second thanksgiving of 1 Thessalonians 2:13, which might be part of a later interpolation,[17] also casts doubts on its Pauline authorship.

The benediction (B 2) has the same two subjects, "God the Father" and "our Lord Jesus Christ," and the phrase "establish your hearts." At the end of the body (B) and the beginning of the parenesis (C) there are the same topics: handed down traditions, Paul's commands, "to establish." In the parenesis (C), both begin with "finally" and have similar vocabulary (e.g., "we exhort," "brothers," "in the Lord Jesus," "live according to the traditions received by Paul"). After a similar prayer for peace (C, D 1), they close with almost identical benedictions (D 3). It is unusual for Paul to follow slavishly the structure of his previous letter.

Close thematic parallels also occur (e.g., 1 Thess 2:9; 2 Thess 3:8; 1 Thess 4:7; 2 Thess 2:13b-14). Concerning the first set (e.g., "remember our labor and toil"), there are no other parallels in the Pauline corpus so close. Why would such a creative writer like Paul draw upon his previous work in such an unimaginative way?

The second argument against authenticity concerns the eschatological differences. First Thessalonians stresses the imminence of the parousia, whereas 2 Thessalonians states that the parousia will not take place until the "rebellion" occurs, the "man of lawlessness" appears, and the "restrainer" is taken away. These two eschatologies appear contradictory. Either the end will come suddenly without warning (1 Thess) or it will be preceded by a series of apocalyptic events that warn of its coming (2 Thess). Although some apocalypses contain these

[17] Pearson, "I Thess 2:13-16," 79–94.

contrasting features (e.g., Matt 24:3-35 and 36-44),[18] it is unusual for Paul to give two distinct types of advice to the same church at the same general time.[19]

When 2 Thessalonians is compared with 1 Thessalonians, a more formal and official tone emerges. Except for 3:1, 7-9, 2 Thessalonians lacks the personal style that is characteristic of 1 Thessalonians. Those verses are all that correspond to over thirty verses of personal remarks in 1 Thessalonians 2:1–3:10. In contrast, the tone of 2 Thessalonians is official and formal. For example, instead of "we give thanks" (1 Thess 1:2), there is "we are *bound* to give thanks" (2 Thess 1:3; 2:13). Also, Paul writes of his desire to see and instruct the Thessalonians (1 Thess 3:10), but this desire is neither reiterated nor alluded to in 2 Thessalonians.

In our comparison, an historical and theological development is presupposed in 2 Thessalonians. We will first look at passages implying a lengthy passage of time (2:2; 3:17) before mentioning the motifs and phrases that appear post-Pauline.

If the letter was written by Paul shortly after 1 Thessalonians (ca. 50), there are certain passages that seem to challenge this assumption. First, would it be necessary for Paul, at such an early date, to warn his readers against the advice of letters circulated in his name without his authority (2 Thess 2:2)? Would the circulation of false Pauline letters have been the tactic of Paul's opponents, who generally questioned his credentials and authority (e.g., 2 Cor 10:10; 11:5; Gal 1:10-11)? If the above tactic is improbable, why would Paul, therefore, feel obligated to guarantee the authenticity of his own letter (3:17)? A statement in this passage is puzzling: "the mark in every letter" *(ho estin sēmeion en pasē epistolē*, 3:17). How many letters had Paul written at this time? Most scholars think that only 1 Thessalonians was previously written.[20] But the phrase "every letter" and the need to provide a mark of

[18] Matthew's gospel appears to include both divergent and conflicting traditions to moderate between various opposing factions in his community; Brown and Meier, *Antioch*, 51–57. This situation of factions is not evident to us in the situation of Paul at Thessalonica (e.g., Acts 17; 1 Thess; cf. 2 Thess).

[19] This particular line of argument assumes that both letters were written within a few years of each other if 2 Thessalonians is authentic. The problem is alleviated if each letter is addressed to a different audience at a different time.

[20] In our chapter on Galatians, pp. 138–41, we argued that Galatians was probably not Paul's first letter but was written around 54 CE.

authenticity for each seem to imply an extensive correspondence of many years (cf. 2:15). David Horrell thinks that the author of 2 Thessalonians "protests too much" when he refers to his own signature at the end of the letter (i.e., he is working too hard to prove he is Paul and is, therefore, probably someone writing after Paul's lifetime).[21]

The next point concerns the nature of the opposition presupposed in certain passages. Second Thessalonians 2:2 refers to a pseudonymous letter claiming that "the day of the Lord is already here." If this teaching of a "realized eschatology" is Gnostic, it also explains the additional problem addressed in 2 Thessalonians: idleness and disorderly conduct (3:6-13). Since these troublemakers have now experienced the final resurrection, they are freed from the bondage of this world and all obligations to it. This position would therefore be that of libertine Gnosticism. Although a nascent form of Gnosticism may have surfaced as early as the mid-first century, a period near the end of the first century is more likely because of the type of problem addressed in 2 Thessalonians.

Finally, let us look at some motifs that appear post-Pauline. In many passages we detect an increased importance of the "Lord Jesus" over "God," presupposing a high Christology of later generations (e.g., *1 Clem* 20.12; 21.6; Ign *Eph* 3.2; 18.2).

2 Thess	*1 Thess*
"beloved by the Lord," 2: 13	"beloved by God," 1:4
"the Lord is faithful," 3:3	"[God] is faithful," 5:24
"the Lord of peace," 3:16	"the God of peace," 5:23

In another passage of 2 Thessalonians, Christ is addressed as God (1:12). Paul could have addressed Christ in this manner (cf. Rom 9:5), but some scholars regard this as a later development in what has been called "emerging orthodoxy" (e.g., Ign *Eph* 18.2; Ign *Rom*, intro.). Gordon Fee, however, makes the observation that 2 Thessalonians uses "Lord" to apply to Christ and "God" in a proto-Trinitarian sense not unlike the way that Paul does in undisputed letters, including Paul's carefully edited use of the *Shema* in 1 Corinthians 8:6.[22]

[21] David G. Horrell, *An Introduction to the Study of Paul*, 2nd ed. (London/New York: T &T Clark, 2006), 127.

[22] Fee, *Thessalonians*, 240, and his *Pauline Christology* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2007), 63–69. Fee's observation on Paul's early view of Christ's

Another post-Pauline feature of the letter is the idea of divine vengeance upon the persecutors of Christians (1:5-10). This conception seems to belong to a generation after Paul, expressed more poetically in Revelation 16:5-7 and 19:2. Also, the related motif of divine vengeance for the murder of Jesus and persecution of Christians is post-Pauline (e.g., Barn. 16.5; Justin, *Apology* 1.47; *Gospel of Peter* 7.25). This is one reason why Pearson regards 1 Thessalonians 2:15-16 (which contains this theme) as Deutero-Pauline.[23]

In the end, it is a close call whether or not to view 2 Thessalonians as Pauline or as written by a disciple after Paul. Fee regards the arguments for a later author as subjective and thinks the letter makes most sense when read as something Paul himself wrote.[24] Still, he does not seem fully sensitive to the many reasons why people living after Paul's death would want to write in Paul's name. The term "forgery," which Fee employs, does not apply well to the diverse and complex idea of authorship in antiquity.[25]

Literary and Chronological Theories

In response to some of the literary and chronological problems connected with the Thessalonian correspondence, the following theories have been postulated. They are: different destinations, rearrangement of chronological order, and a composite work of more than two letters.

---

divinity finds agreement with Larry Hurtado's earlier claims in *Lord Jesus Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003), 113, 139.

[23] Pearson, "1 Thess 2:13-16," 84. For more extensive comparisons and source critical observations supporting 2 Thessalonians as Deutero-Pauline, see Richard, *Thessalonians*, 20–24.

[24] Fee, *Thessalonians*, 237–42.

[25] For example, M. Tullius Cicero (first century BCE) dictated letters to his secretary, Tiro (*To Atticus* 4.16.1), but Tiro also collaborated with Cicero (11.5) and even wrote letters in Cicero's name (3.1.5; 11.5). Iamblichus (third century CE), in his *Life of Pythagoras* 31.198, attributes much of it to the great Pythagoras (sixth century BCE). Witherington regards these occurences as rare, *New Testament Rhetoric* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2009), 107, but see Talbert, *Ephesians and Colossians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2007), 7–11. James H. Charlesworth lists seven interrelated literary categories of pseudepigraphy in Charlesworth, "Pseudonymity and Pseudepigraphy," *AYBD* 5, 540–541. See also our discussion of authorship in chap. 7, pp. 144–49, 160–62.

Different Destinations

The first destination theory is that 2 Thessalonians was addressed to a *separate* house church of Jewish Christians in Thessalonica (A. Harnack, 1910). Early Christians worshipped in house churches (e.g., Rom 16:5; 1 Cor 16:19; Col 4:15; Acts 12:12) and there were usually several at each location (e.g., Rom 16:3-15). However, there are two problems with this theory. Why would so much of 1 Thessalonians be repeated in 2 Thessalonians if the former letter was to be circulated to "all the brethren" (5:27)? Also, why is no reference to 1 Thessalonians made in 2 Thessalonians? Second Thessalonians 2:2 refers to a pseudonymous letter, not 1 Thessalonians.

A second destination theory is that 2 Thessalonians was misnamed and formerly addressed to the Philippians (E. Schweizer, 1945). Titles for the NT books were not given until the second century and it is possible that some were misnamed. However, the only data for this theory are two passages in Polycarp, *Letter to the Philippians*. One reveals Polycarp's acquaintance with 2 Thessalonians 1:4 (Pol *Phil* 11.3) and the other mentions that Paul wrote "letters" (plural) to the Philippians (3.2). The theory supposes that 2 Thessalonians was the second letter to the Philippians. It lacks sufficient evidence.

Reversal of Order Theory

The major theory of chronological rearrangement argues that 2 Thessalonians was written before 1 Thessalonians (Manson, 1953). The reversal of order could have been due to the tendency to place longer letters first. For example, the NT order of books from Romans to 2 Thessalonians is according to size with the longest first. This procedure is evident in the fourth-century lists. Second Thessalonians also appears to have a cruder eschatology and anticipates persecution, whereas 1 Thessalonians has a more developed eschatology and views persecution as past. Finally, specific topics discussed in 1 Thessalonians 4:9, 13; 5:1 might be interpreted as responses to questions raised from reading 2 Thessalonians (e.g., 2 Thess 3 / 1 Thess 4:9-12; 2 Thess 2 / 1 Thess 5:1). For example, the *peri* sections in 1 Thess 4:9–5: 11 ("concerning the") are said to concern problems arising from a previous letter (cf. 1 Cor 7:1; 8:1).

There are, however, a number of problems connected with the above rearrangement of the Thessalonian letters. First, our earliest lists of NT books were not arranged according to size or length (e.g., Marcion,

Clem of Alexandria). Second, why is there no specific mention of a previous letter in 1 Thessalonians? Paul usually refers to his previous correspondences (e.g., 1 Cor 5:9; 2 Cor 2:34). Third, the "more primitive" eschatology of 2 Thessalonians can be explained by its greater dependence on more traditional apocalypticism, as in Revelation. Fourth, in 1 Thessalonians Paul speaks of persecution as a *continuous* threat (3:3) as well as a past event. Fifth, there are no specific points of correlation between topics discussed in 1 Thessalonians and what is already mentioned in 2 Thessalonians.[26] For example, it is difficult to see how 1 Thessalonians 4:9 specifically deals with the reluctance of the church to apply the harsh discipline commanded in 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15. Also, 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11 need not presuppose a previous discussion of the parousia set forth in 2 Thessalonians 2. The death of Christians (1 Thess 4:13-18; 5:9-11) would be a shock to any congregation that believed it would live to see the Lord's return.[27]

The Composite Letter Theory

The most influential composite theory of the Thessalonian correspondence is outlined below.[28]

A. 2 Thess 1:1-12; 3:6-16 (first letter sent on hearing news of Gnostic enthusiasm in the church).	B. 1 Thess 1:1–2:12; 4:2–5:28 (an attempt to counter Gnostic charges against the credibility of his ministry).
C. 2 Thess 2:13-14; 2:1-12; 2:15–3:3, 5, 17-18 (Paul's reply to news that a letter ascribed to him has circulated and encouraged eschatological fanaticism).	D. 1 Thess 2:13–4:1 (Paul's joyful letter after Timothy has returned from Thessalonica with a good report).

[26] For further discussion and critiques, see Best, *Thess*, 42–45; D. Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, 3rd ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1970), 575–78; and Marshall, *Thess 11–16*; Green, *The Letters to the Thessalonians*, 64–69.

[27] R. Jewett, "Enthusiastic Radicalism and the Thessalonian Correspondence," *SBL Seminar Papers* 1 (1972): 190–91.

[28] Schmithals, *Paul and the Gnostics*, 123–218. It is discussed and refuted in Best, *Thess* 17–19, and Marshall, *Thess 15–16*. Richards maintains the composite view with some refinements, *Thessalonians* (2007), 11–19.

This composite theory is based on the following views: (a) an earlier letter fragment in 1 Thessalonians (2:13–4:1); (b) 2 Thessalonians, or a fragment of it, preceding 1 Thessalonians; (c) 2 Thessalonians is comprised of two letters written by Paul; and (d) the Thessalonian correspondence countered a unified opposition of Gnostic enthusiasm. Although an interpolation exists in 1 Thessalonians 2:13-16, there are insufficient reasons to challenge the letter as a unified composition.[29] The problems with the chronological priority and Pauline authenticity of 2 Thessalonians have already been emphasized. Finally, we have argued that 1 and 2 Thessalonians, even though they address related problems of "gnosis," are separated historically from each other. Although we favored elsewhere a composite theory for Philippians (chap. 8), the evidence here is insufficient to endorse a similar theory for the Thessalonian correspondence.

The Date and Place of Composition

Based on our previous discussion in this chapter, 1 Thessalonians was written about 50 CE from Corinth, shortly after the founding of the community there. In 1 Thessalonians, Paul is addressing a Gentile community that is both troubled by the death of some of its members and persecuted by non-Christian neighbors. To complicate matters there are also some spiritual enthusiasts who believe themselves to be liberated from the world and its obligations. Although he addresses these problems, the apostle makes a special effort to show his affection and appreciation for the congregation.

Second Thessalonians, as we have argued, was written near the end of the first century, probably to a Macedonian community by a follower of the apostle Paul. First Thessalonians is utilized in this letter to counter some form of libertine Gnosticism. The author writes in the name of his revered teacher to a new generation of readers.

Genre and Rhetorical Function

Ancient Letter Genre

From our comparisons of 1 and 2 Thessalonians and earlier discussion (chap. 2), it is clear that both writings are early Christian letters.

[29] For extensive argumentation, see Best, *Thess*, 30–35.

In 1 Thessalonians, Paul is concerned with securing the goodwill and favor of his readers (1:1-10; 5:23-28), affirming the credibility of his ministry (2:1-12),[30] maintaining personal contact through an emissary (Timothy, 2:17–3:13), and exhorting the congregation on various issues confronting them (4:1–5:22).[31] The letter attempts to secure church sentiment and support (chaps. 1–3) before expedient advice is given to the congregation (chaps. 4–5).

Deliberative Rhetorical Function

Both 1 and 2 Thessalonians seem to function as advisory rhetoric[32] (e.g., Demosthenes; Cicero; Quintilian, cf. 1 Cor 5–16; 2 Cor 1–9; Phlm), but 1 Thessalonians is more persuasive (*protropē*) and 2 Thessalonians more dissuasive (*apotropē*). For example, the passage of 2 Thessalonians 2:1-7 is countering rumors that "the day of the Lord has come," with the presentation of an apocalyptic timetable of events preceding the end. Also, the exhortations in 3:6-16 warn against a form of libertinism probably related to the apocalyptic fanaticism

[30] Malherbe with parallels from Dio Chrysotom argues that this section is not apologetic but paraenetic where Paul distinguishes his ministry from other Hellenistic preachers, "Gentle as a Nurse," 203–17. Ian Lambrecht, however, shows that Paul's appeals to veracity here and the nature of the letter argues against Malherbe's view, "Thanksgiving in 1 Thess 1–3," in *The Thessalonians Debate*, ed. K. P. Donfried and J. Beutler (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000), 159–61.

[31] For further elaboration, see H. Boers, "The Form Critical Study of Paul's Letters: 1 Thess as a Case Study," *NTS* 22 (1975–76): 140–58. In this article also 1 Thess 2:13-16 is regarded as a Deutero-Pauline interpolation.

[32] J. A. Goldstein, *The Letters of Demosthenes* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968); Frank W. Hughes, *Early Christian Rhetoric and 2 Thess* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1989) and his "The Rhetoric of the Letters," *The Thessalonians Debate*, 194–254; G. A. Kennedy, *NT Rhetorical Criticism* (1984), 142–44; B. C. Johanson, *To All the Brethren: A Text-Linguistic and Rhetorical Approach to 1 Thess* (Stockholm: Almquist & Wiksell International, 1987); J. L. Sumney, "The Bearing of a Pauline Rhetorical Pattern on the Integrity of 2 Thess," *Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 81 (1990): 192–204. We find unconvincing Bruce Winter's argument that Paul, to distance himself from the self-serving sophists, rejected classical rhetoric for the presentation of his message, "The Entries and Ethics of Orators and Paul (1 Thess 2:1-12)," *TynBull* 44 (1993): 55–74.

countered in 2 Thessalonians 2. Furthermore, both the warning in 2 Thessalonians 4:14 and the mark of authenticity in v. 17 confirm this dissuasive concern. Therefore, despite the fact that both have deliberative functions, 2 Thessalonians contains more warnings against heresy, whereas 1 Thessalonians, except in 2:1-8 where Paul defends his ministry, contains more constructive exhortations for its readers (4–5). See rhetorical outlines below:

Rhetorical Structure of 1 Thessalonians

Epistolary prescript and greeting	1:1
Exordium: securing goodwill, cooperation	1:2-10
Refutatio: Paul defends his ministry	2:1-8
Narratio: Paul and the Thessalonians	2:9–3:13
Exhortatio: do as you learned from us[33]	4:1–5:22
Peroratio: prayer and closing	5:23-28

Rhetorical Structure of 2 Thessalonians

Epistolary prescript	1:1-2
Exordium: thanksgiving for the readers and judgment on the oppressors	1:3-12
Partitio	2:1-2
Refutatio: let no one deceive you concerning the day of the Lord	2:3-15
Exhortatio: pray and work	3:1-15
Epistolary closing	3:16-18

Summary

In our survey of the Thessalonian letters, we looked at both the background situation and the books themselves. In the background discussion we noted that Thessalonica was both the provincial headquarters and an important trade and religious center in Macedonia. Paul visited the city on his first European mission (ca. 49). The Christian

[33] This unit of paraenesis includes psychogic adaptation (4:9-12) with protreptic speech (4:1; 5:8); see Elliott and Reasoner, *Documents and Images*, 68–73; and Abraham J. Malherbe, ed. and trans., *Ancient Epistolary Theorists*, SBLSBS 19 (Atlanta: Scholars, 1988).

community founded by the apostle appears to be primarily Gentile, and they were facing some persecution from their neighbors. Paul maintained a healthy relationship with the Thessalonians up to his final trip to Jerusalem.

The following comments can be made concerning the Thessalonian books themselves. Even though the authenticity of 1 Thessalonians is unquestioned, the Pauline authorship ascribed to 2 Thessalonians is disputed. Why would Paul so slavishly imitate a previous letter to the same congregation a few years later? The theology and historical situation also suggest a period after Paul (late first century). The various destination, rearrangement, and composite theories of the letters, although noteworthy, are all based on insufficient evidence. First Thessalonians was written by Paul around 50 CE from Corinth, shortly after founding the church. Second Thessalonians was probably written near the end of the first century to a Macedonian community by a follower of the apostle Paul. Both 1 and 2 Thessalonians are early Christian letters. In 1 Thessalonians, Paul seeks to secure the goodwill of his readers and establish the credibility of his ministry before addressing important issues concerning eschatology and social responsibility. Second Thessalonians, as an imitation of 1 Thessalonians, contains similar advisory concerns but has a more dissuasive emphasis (i.e., warnings against heresy). It appears to be countering the teachings of libertine Gnostics who have spiritually experienced the final resurrection and have consequently shirked all earthly responsibilities. It was for this reason that the Pauline disciple "resurrected" Paul's letter (1 Thess) to address a new situation of readers.

Map D: Map of Roman Empire, first century CE.

CHAPTER 10

The Pastoral Letters

Introduction

The letters of Paul to Timothy and Titus have been labeled the "Pastoral Epistles" since the eighteenth century. They were given this title because of their usefulness for instructing Christian leaders.[1] But

[1] Professor Paul Anton at the University of Halle (1726) was the first to give all three books this technical designation, although D. N. Bardot (1703) and Thomas Aquinas (1270) also used the word "Pastoral" in their discussion of these books, see Raymond F. Collins, *1 & 2 Timothy and Titus: A Commentary*, NTL (WJK, 2002), 1; P. N. Harrison, *The Problem of the Pastoral Epistles* (London: Oxford University Press, 1921), 13–16.

For commentaries and other studies, see Collins, *1 & 2 Timothy and Titus*; Philip H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, NICNT (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006); Luke T. Johnson, *First and Second Letters to Timothy*, AYB 35A (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001); *idem*, *Letters to Paul's Delegates: 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus* (TPI, 1996); I. Howard Marshall, *The Pastoral Epistles*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999); James W. Aageson, *Paul, the Pastoral Epistles, and the Early Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008); W. Hulitt Gloer, *1 & 2 Timothy-Titus* (Macon, GA: Smyth and Helwys, 2010); M. Dibelius and H. Conzelmann, *The Pastoral Epistles*, Hermeneia, trans. P. Buttolph et al. (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1972); B. S. Easton, *Pastoral Epistles* (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1948); Gordon D. Fee, *1 and* 2 *Timothy, Titus*, NIBCNT (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1988); B. Fiore, *The Function of Personal Example in the Socratic and Pastoral Epistles* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1986); Donald Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles*, TNTC (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1957); A. T. Hanson, *The Pastoral Epistles*, NCBC (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1982); A. J. Hultgren and R. Aus, *I–II Timothy, Titus, II Thessalonians*, ACNT (Minneapolis: Augsburg University Press, 1984); R. J. Karris, *The Pastoral Epistles*, New Testament Message 17 (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1979); *idem*, "The Background and Significance of the Polemic of the Pastoral Epistles," *JBL* 92 (1973): 549–64; J. N. D. Kelly, *A Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles*, HNTC (New York: Harper &

the designation may be inadequate. The contents are much more than private correspondences from a senior pastor (Paul) to younger pastors (Timothy, Titus).[2] First Timothy and Titus also contain advice for the "regulation of church discipline" (Muratorian Fragment). Second Timothy also seems to have a separate rhetorical function as a final will and testament of the apostle Paul. Nevertheless, all three writings share such noteworthy similarities that they form a separate group within the Pauline corpus. In this chapter we will observe their distinctiveness while exploring questions of authorship, setting, and date. Our examination of the literary character and rhetorical structure of the books will also point out their similarities with other writings of late antiquity.

Authorship

The authorship of the Pastorals is disputed. First, there is only limited external evidence for the use of the Pastorals before 150 CE. Polycarp, *To the Philippians* 4:1, alludes to 1 Timothy 6:7, 10. Also Tertullian writes that Marcion rejected the Pastoral Letters when forming his own "New Testament," which may indicate that the Pastorals

---

Row, 1963); G. W. Knight, *The Faithful Sayings in the Pastoral Letters* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1979); James D. Miller, *The Pastoral Letters as Composite Documents*, SNTSMS 93 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); J. D. Quinn, "The Pastoral Epistles," *BibToday* 23, no. 4 (1985): 228–38; *idem*, *The Letter to Titus: A New Translation with Notes and Commentary and an Introduction to Titus, 1 and 2 Timothy*, AYB 35 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990); Risto Saarinen, *The Pastoral Epistles with Philemon and Jude*, BTCB (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos, 2008); Ray Van Neste, *Cohesion and Structure in the Pastoral Epistles*, JSNTSup 280 (London: T&T Clark, 2004); D. C. Verner, *The Household of God: The Social World of the Pastoral Epistles*, SBLDS 71 (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1983); Stephen O. Wilson, *Luke and the Pastoral Epistles* (London: SPCK, 1979); Paul Trebilco, *The Early Christians in Ephesus from Paul to Ignatius* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007).

[2] The closing benediction, "Grace be with you" is in the second-person plural (*meth humōn*, 1 Tim 6:21b; 2 Tim 4:22; Titus 3:5b "with all of you"). Some suggest that 1–2 Tim and Titus read (in places) like the edict of a superior to newly appointed delegates with instructions for the new mission, as in the responses of Emperor Trajan to the correspondences of Pliny the Younger (ca. 110). See discussion in Towner, *Letters*, 33–36.

were known to Marcion in the early second century.[3] Second, there are noticeable differences in style and vocabulary with the undisputed Pauline letters (i.e., 1 Thess, Gal, 1 and 2 Cor, Phil, Phlm, Rom). In the paragraphs that follow, we will present evidence both for and against the authenticity of these letters within the Pauline corpus, though first we must explain why authorship matters.

It is common to view perceived differences between the Pastoral Letters and the uncontested letters of Paul as evidence that someone long after Paul, perhaps in the early or mid-second century, wrote them. Identification of the historical author or authors of the Pastorals is not subject to conclusive proof and in itself is not worth spending too much space discussing. It is rather how decisions related to the authorship of the Pastorals can subtly affect one's reading of the New Testament that make the authorship question worthy of consideration. New Testament scholarship has in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries regarded the Pastoral Letters as a product of an emerging, catholic form of Christianity of the second century. While this is certainly possible, that model tends to diminish the value of the Pastorals in one's quest for a more primitive, apostolic Christianity. What should give readers pause is therefore what one does with the decision on authorship. It is very easy to say that this means that the Pastoral Letters do not represent Pauline Christianity and that if we want to know what Paul really taught about the Christian faith or about how to function in church communities, we should ignore them. This extends the tendency, common in certain forms of Christianity, to focus on one book or section of the New Testament and take it as the definitive statement for Christianity, rating it as more significant than other parts of the New Testament. Another option, however, is to observe continuities between the Pastoral Letters and the uncontested Pauline letters. When this is done, the Pastorals provide evidence for how one can apply Paul's letters in the day-to-day decisions of church life. One example of someone who sees these continuities while affirming that the letters were written after Paul is Risto Saarinen. His commentary takes the position that the letters are written by a student of Paul in the late first century with no attempt

[3] Tertullian, *Against Marcion*, 5.21; Collins, *1 & 2 Timothy and Titus*, 2; Luke T. Johnson, *The Writings of the New Testament: An Interpretation*, rev. ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999), 429.

to fool readers that the actual author is Paul.[4] I. Howard Marshall also supports this view, referring to these letters as "allonymous letters" edited by a disciple of Paul who adapted his teaching for future generations in a manner faithful to the apostle's intentions.[5]

After discussing factors related to the Pastoral Letters' authorship, we will leave the question open. Whatever you, our readers, choose to conclude about their authorship, we hope that you will be alert to the possibility that these letters can easily be functionally neutralized, marginalized, or excluded from one's New Testament canon. We hope that if you accept the fourth-century decision to canonize the New Testament in its twenty-seven book form, you will continue to read these letters as Scripture, whatever your conclusion about their authorship.

Arguments for Authenticity

Although the early witnesses of 1 Clement (95), Ignatius, and Polycarp (early second century) have linguistic similarities with the Pastorals, including the allusion to Polycarp's letter mentioned above, all seem to stand in the same ecclesiastical and cultural tradition, but it is difficult to demonstrate that the witnesses just mentioned are explicitly using the Pastoral Letters.[6]

It is also difficult to ascertain whether the Pastorals were either unknown or omitted by other early witnesses. As mentioned above, it is possible that Marcion knew these letters and omitted them in his canon; they are also missing from the Chester Beatty Papyrus, p^{46} (ca. 200), although it breaks off before the end of the codex (at 1 Thess 5:5). It seems likely, however, that Tatian of Syria (160) rejected 1 and 2 Timothy, but not Titus.[7] Mention of the Pastorals appears in the Muratorian Fragment at the end of its listing of the Pauline letters, but

[4] Saarinen, *Pastoral Epistles*, 22–23.

[5] Marshall, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 83–84, 93. On the use of amanuensis, coauthor, compiler (e.g., Tychichus, Luke, Timothy, Titus), see Towner, *Letters*, 86–88.

[6] Kümmel, *Introduction*, 370; Dibelius and Conzelmann, *Pastoral Epistles*, 84–86. See discussion of this matter in Aageson, *Paul, The Pastoral Epistles, and the Early Church*, chap. 5.

[7] According to Jerome in his *Prologue to Titus*, see Collins, *1 & 2 Timothy and Titus* (2002), 2; Dibelius and Conzelmann, *Pastoral Epistles*, 2.

the second-century date of this document is questioned.[8] Nevertheless, it was from the time of Irenaeus (180) until the nineteenth century that 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus were cited without dispute as authentic letters of Paul.[9]

The internal claims of Pauline authorship are explicit. The author identifies himself in all the epistolary prescripts as *Paulos apostolos*. His addressees are Timothy (e.g., 2 Cor 1:1; Phil 1:1) and Titus (2 Cor 2:13; Gal 2:1), two well-known coworkers in Paul's undisputed letters. First Timothy purports to have been written after Paul had left Ephesus on his way to Macedonia in the hopes of rejoining Timothy there (1 Tim 1:3; 3:14; 4:13; cf. 2 Cor 2:12-13; 7:5-6). In the letter to Titus he writes to his coworker whom he had left behind in Crete (Titus 1:5; cf. Acts 27:7, 12f., 21).[10] In 2 Timothy, Paul is a prisoner at Rome (2 Tim 1:17; cf. Acts 28). Facing martyrdom, he appoints Timothy as a successor (2 Tim 1:8, 11; 2:3, 9; 4:6-8; cf. Acts 20:17-38). In the Pastorals, the names of certain individuals (e.g., Priscilla, Aquila, Apollos, Tychicus) and localities (e.g., Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, Miletus) are also known from Paul's letters and Acts. The Pauline identifications, the mention of his coworkers, and his travels in familiar territory all give one the impression that these are letters composed by Paul.

[8] See A. C. Sundberg, "Canon Muratori: A Fourth Century List," *HTR* 66 (1973): 1–41, and "Muratorian Fragment," *IDBSup* 609–10; G. M. Hahneman, "The Muratorian Fragment and the Origin of the New Testament Canon," in *The Canon Debate*, ed. Lee Martin McDonald and James A. Sanders (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002), 405–15.

[9] For support of the Pauline authorship of the Pastorals, see Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* 1.1, 9–10; 4.7 (ca. 200); Tertullian of Carthage (200); Eusebius, *Eccl Hist*, 2.22; 3.4 (320, Caesarea); Athanasius *Ep. fest.* 39 (367, Alexandria); Jerome *Ep.* 53 (394, Bethlehem); Aageson, *Paul, The Pastoral Letters, and the Early Church* (2008), chap. 6; and recent commentaries by, e.g., Fee, Guthrie, Towner. It was not until the early 1800s (J. E. C. Schmidt, 1804; F. Schleiermacher, 1807) that the Pauline authorship of the Pastorals was disputed on stylistic grounds. On Schleiermacher and his study of 1 Timothy, see D. DeVries, "Schleiermacher, F. D. E.," *DMBI* (2007), 888. For current discussion, see E. E. Ellis, "The Authorship of the Pastoral Epistles: A Résumé and Assessment of Recent Trends," *Paul and His Recent Interpreters* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1961), 49–57; C. F. D. Moule, "The Problem of the Pastoral Epistles: A Reappraisal," *BJRL* 47 (1965): 430–52.

[10] For a list of primary sources of background information on Crete (e.g., Diodorus Siculus, Pliny *Nat. Hist.*), see Towner, *Letters*, 659–62.

Fig. 17: Paul the Apostle. Russian icon from first quarter of the eighteenth century.

Arguments against Pauline Authorship

There are four main areas of difference that scholars of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries observed between the Pastorals and the Pauline letters they accepted as authentic: chronological, linguistic, doctrinal, and ecclesiastical. None of these areas by themselves render Pauline authorship untenable, but, taken together, they account for the judgment that reigned in twentieth-century academic circles against Pauline authorship. We will review these areas of difficulty in the discussion that follows, nuancing it with counterarguments and the newer sensitivities to the limits of modernity's confidence in source criticism and unfalsifiable assertions regarding what an individual could or could not have written.

Chronological Differences. The activities of Paul in the Pastorals raise chronological problems because none fit well with the life of Paul as we know it from both the undisputed letters and Acts.[11] We will first state the discrepancies before examining the attempts to harmonize the data.

According to 1 Timothy 1:3, Paul left Timothy in Ephesus and went to Macedonia, hoping to rejoin him in Ephesus (3:14; 4:13). In the book of Acts, however, Paul left Ephesus for Macedonia (ca. 55 CE), where he is joined by Timothy there (Acts 19:1, 21-22). The apostle intends to return to Corinth and Jerusalem but *not* Ephesus (20:25, 38). According to Acts, not even Timothy returns to Ephesus; instead, he accompanies the apostle on his final trip to Jerusalem (20:4)! Acts

[11] For attempts to locate the letters within the framework of Acts, see Towner, *Letters*, 12–15. Our discussion of the chronological differences (above) will underscore the difficulties with this approach.

provides no confirmation of a proposed Ephesian rendezvous between Paul and Timothy as stated in 1 Timothy 1:3.

In Titus, Paul and Titus have been working in Crete and the apostle leaves Titus there to appoint elders (Titus 1:5). After the arrival of Tychicus or Artemas, he is to join Paul at Nicopolis (3:12). According to Acts, however, Paul stops at Crete as a prisoner en route to Rome (Acts 27:7, 12-13, 21) and has neither the time nor liberty to organize a church there. Did Paul stay at Crete before his final Jerusalem trip (Acts 20:3)? We have insufficient data to be certain.

The information in 2 Timothy raises problems concerning the place of Paul's writing and the location of the addressee. Was Paul writing as a prisoner from Rome? It is clear that he was a prisoner (1:8; 2:9) and nearing the end of his life (4:6-8). Although 2 Timothy 1:16-17 assumes that Paul had been in Rome, it is unclear if he is currently residing there as a prisoner.

Could Paul have been writing as a prisoner in Caesarea? According to the apostle's activities in 2 Timothy, Paul had recently visited Troas (4:13), Corinth, and Miletus (v. 20). In Acts 20:2, 6, 15, these are the same locations he visited en route to Jerusalem (57 CE). In the holy city, Paul was brought before the Sanhedrin, but he escaped injury (Acts 23:1-11). Could 2 Timothy 4:16-17 be referring to this event? Compare Acts 23:11 with 2 Timothy 4:17. Could Paul's imprisonment in Caesarea (Acts 23:31-33) have been the occasion for the departure of certain associates for Thessalonica, Galatia, Dalmatia (2 Tim 4:10), and Ephesus (2 Tim 4:12)? Unfortunately, at this time (57–58 CE) Paul had not yet been to Rome, which is presupposed in 2 Timothy 1:17.

Was Paul writing to Timothy in Ephesus? It is clear that Timothy was in Ephesus (1:18) and that Aquila and Priscilla who are with him (4:19) had also resided there (Acts 18:18-19, 26; 1 Cor 16:19). It is unusual, however, that Paul would say, "I have sent Tychicus to Ephesus" (4:12) instead of "to you" (Timothy). Also, why would the apostle need to report that he left Trophimus ill at Miletus (4:20), when the location is only thirty-two miles south of Ephesus, where Timothy was supposed to be residing? These problems raise questions about its destination and author.

From patristic allusions, some have argued for the following sequence of events: Paul was released from his first Roman imprisonment (Acts 28:16-31), engaged in brief missionary activity (the activities in the Pastorals and possibly Spain), was arrested and imprisoned a second time in Rome, where he was finally executed (64 or 67 CE).[12]

[12] See the second imprisonment theory discussed in Towner, *Letters*, 11–12.

The clearest statement of this hypothesis is found in Eusebius (*Eccl Hist* 2.22.2). Unfortunately, we cannot be certain that Eusebius was not influenced by Paul's letter to the Romans, where the apostle discloses his plans to go to Spain (15:28) and by the scanty allusions in 2 Timothy, with which he was probably familiar. Clement of Rome (95 CE) mentions a mission of Paul "to the extreme west" before his martyrdom (1 Clem 5.7), but we are unsure if this is Spain and he mentions no release and second imprisonment. The Muratorian Fragment alludes to Paul's departure from Rome for Spain but no second imprisonment. These patristic allusions are meager and questionable. The Pastorals also supply no clear evidence for a second Roman imprisonment. "My first defense" (2 Tim 4:16) could be an allusion to Paul's hearing in Jerusalem (Acts 23) or Caesarea (Acts 24–26) rather than a "first" hearing in Rome. Paul himself alludes to numerous imprisonments (2 Cor 6:5; 11:24-25).

To conclude our consideration of the chronological problems we must admit that Acts and the undisputed Pauline letters, even when taken together, do not provide a complete chronology. While the Pastorals do not clearly allow us to place their composition at a time in Paul's life, they may supply information—just as 2 Corinthians does—that we would otherwise not know regarding Paul's missionary work. For example, the reference to Dalmatia in 2 Timothy 4:10 may provide evidence of Pauline work in the mysterious "Illyricum" he mentions in Romans 15:19. The chronological argument against Pauline authorship is not in itself compelling evidence against his authorship but is one set of factors that need to be included in any assessment of these letters' place within the Pauline letter collection.

Linguistic Differences. Linguistic studies in the previous generation of scholarship purported to establish linguistic incompatibility between the Pastorals and the uncontested Pauline writings. The following three short paragraphs highlight some of the salient arguments against Pauline authorship of that generation.

The Pastorals have 335 out of 3484 total words peculiar to them, with 175 of them appearing nowhere else in the NT. The use of such special vocabulary occurs two-and-one-half times more frequently than in a cross section of Paul's undisputed letters.[13]

[13] The statistical research of Grayston and Herdan has revised the earlier work of Harrison (1921) and confirmed the studies of Morgenthaler (1958);

The distinctive vocabulary of the Pastorals is more characteristic of popular Hellenistic religion than of Paul's letters. Note the following examples: "piety" (*eusebeia*, 2 Tim 3:5), "sound teaching" (*hygiainouse didaskalia*, 1 Tim 1:10), "sound-minded" (*sōphron*, Titus 1:8), "self-controlled" (*enkratē*, Titus 1:8), "irreligious" (*anosios*, 2 Tim 3:2), "manifestation" (*epiphaneia*, 1 Tim 6:14), "way of life" (*agogē*, 2 Tim 3:10), "loving good" (*philagathos*, Titus 1:8), "truth" (*alētheia*, 2 Tim 2:15), "Savior" *(sōtēr*, Titus 2:13).[14]

Some of the "typical" Pauline language is also absent from the Pastorals. For example, the following Pauline words are absent: "to proclaim good news" *(euangelizesthai)*, "spiritual," "to die," "body," and "uncircumcised." Also, those skeptical of Pauline authorship observe that significant religious concepts such as "righteousness" and "in Christ" appear only a few times with altered meanings. These differences lead many, such as Raymond F. Collins, to conclude that "an anonymous author invoked [Paul's] authority in composing the Pastoral Epistles."[15]

More recently, Luke Timothy Johnson has questioned whether the statistics regarding vocabulary comparison are best handled by assuming that the Pastorals must be regarded as an undifferentiated whole. He observes how stylistic analyses show that 2 Timothy uses vocabulary quite close to the uncontested Pauline letters. He even raises the possibility that 2 Timothy is authentically Pauline and that 1 Timothy

---

see K. Grayston and G. Herdan, "The Authorship of the Pastorals in the Light of Statistical Linguistics," *NTS* 6 (October, 1959): 1–15; Harrison, *The Problem of the Pastoral Epistles*; Robert Morgenthaler, *Statistik des Neutestamentlichen Wortschatzes* (Zurich: Gotthelf, 1958), 30, 38–39; Collins, *Letters That Paul Did Not Write*, 94–96. The following works, however, place certain limitations on the statistical analysis of NT words: Guthrie, *Pastoral Epistles*, 212–28; Bruce M. Metzger, "A Reconsideration of Certain Arguments against the Pauline Authorship of the Pastoral Epistles," *ExpT* 70 (1958–59): 91–94;

[14] For similar language in Hellenistic inscriptions, see F. W. Danker, *Benefactor* (St. Louis: Clayton, 1982), 317–92. For similar themes in Roman imperialism, see Elliott and Reasoner, *Documents and Images*, chap. 3. Similar language can also be found in Paul's undisputed letters, but it is more concentrated in 1–2 Timothy and Titus.

[15] Collins, *1 and 2 Timothy and Titus*, 8–9.

was written by a later author of the Pauline school.[16] Differences in diction and even the meaning of terms such as "righteousness" and "in Christ" may also be accounted for by differing epistolary situations.

Stylistic Differences. Those predisposed against Pauline authorship see a clear difference of style in the Pastorals. Much of Paul's dramatic writing style—its spirited energy, emotional intensity, and impassioned argumentation—is lacking in the Pastorals. What predominates, instead, is a monotonous style of repetition and a prudish concern for precision. These dissimilarities are most evident by some differences in grammatical constructions (e.g., "faithful is the saying . . ."). Those more cautious regarding our ability to identify the Pastorals' author(s) note that the different occasions of author and audiences, compared to what we see reflected in Romans or 1 Corinthians, for example, may account for some or all of these stylistic differences.

Doctrinal Differences. Even though the Pastorals contain some Pauline-sounding themes, most of its teaching is foreign to Pauline thought. Statements corresponding to Paul's teaching, but phrased differently, are: "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Tim 1:15), salvation by grace not works (2 Tim 1:9; Titus 3:5), justified by his grace to be heirs in the hope of eternal life (Titus 3:7), and "to believe in him for eternal life" (1 Tim 1:16). Much of the grammar in these statements is different from that in the recognized letters. Many of them are confessional statements or are elaborated upon with lengthy epithets of God and Christ. Even some of the Pauline-sounding phrases convey a different meaning than they did for Paul. For example, "justification by grace" seems to be the fruit of baptism attained by God's power (Titus 3:4-7).[17]

Hellenistic statements that appear alien to Paul are: "For the grace of God has appeared [*epiphanē*], bringing salvation to all" (Titus 2:11); "when the kindness and benevolence [*philanthropia*] of God our Savior [*sōtēros*] appeared" (3:4); "while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Savior [*tou megalou*

[16] L. T. Johnson, *First and Second Letters to Timothy*, 78–90; *idem*, *Paul's Delegates*, 11–12. Jerome Murphy-O'Connor also supports the authenticity of 2 Timothy in his *Paul: A Critical Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 357–59.

[17] For baptismal imagery in Titus 3 with Greco-Roman parallels, see Dibelius and Conzelmann, *Pastoral Epistles*, 148–50.

theou kai sōtēros], Jesus Christ" (2:13); "the blessed and only Sovereign [*dynastēs*], the King of kings and Lord of lords. It is he alone who has immortality [*athanasian*] and dwells in unapproachable light" (1 Tim 6:15-16). The elaborate epithets ascribed to God and Christ with language from Hellenistic piety are distinctive features not found in the undisputed letters of Paul. Still, if Paul is using creeds that some of his churches employed, we must allow for the possibility that these creeds themselves are baptizing words from secular or pagan contexts and of putting them to use in Christian liturgies.

Ecclesiastical Differences. The standard, scholarly view of the twentieth century was to say that in the Pastorals and Paul's recognized letters, we have two different versions of the apostle's ecclesiastical views and concerns. Although the general portrait of Paul in the Pastorals as an apostolic "pastor" concerned with the welfare of the churches he founded finds agreement in the undisputed letters, the differences seemed apparent when scholars compared the specific views in both sets of writings. We will examine, for example, the church's nature and mission and its organization and ethics.

In the Pastorals, the church is more institutionalized and defensive, whereas in Paul's uncontested letters it is more charismatic and expansive. In 1 and 2 Timothy, the church is to maintain ethical and doctrinal order as "God's household" (1 Tim 3:5, 15; 2 Tim 2:20-22) and "guard what has been entrusted" (1 Tim 6:20; see also 2 Tim 1:14) as the "pillar and support of the truth" (1 Tim 3:15). It seems that these concepts and directives envision one universal church rather than the concerns of local churches in Ephesus and Crete.

In Paul's undisputed writings, the church is the body of Christ, whose "members" manifest diverse gifts of the Spirit (1 Cor 12). It is also God's holy temple (1 Cor 3:17) whose members must be holy and pure before God. The churches were encouraged to proclaim the faith to everyone as Paul himself did (1 Thess 1:8; Rom 1:8). Although his metaphors encompassed one church of Jews and Gentiles, Paul was mainly concerned with the issues and activities of the local churches he founded (e.g., 1 Thess; 1 and 2 Cor).

In the Pastorals, there seems to be an institutionalized view of leadership and congregational behavior. In the undisputed letters of Paul, we have a charismatic view of leadership (1 Cor 12; Rom 12) and eschatological ethics (1 Thess 5; Gal 6) for believers.

Unlike other NT writings, the Pastorals list specific qualifications for the church offices of bishop (Titus 1:7-9; 1 Tim 3:1-7), elder (Titus

1:5-6; 1 Tim 5:17-22; cf. Jas 5:14; 1 Pet 5:1) and deacon (1 Tim 3:8-13). These were appointed offices (Titus 1:5; 1 Tim 5:22) following the precedent of the apostle Paul's appointment of Timothy (2 Tim 1:6; cf. 1 Tim 4:14). It appears that both bishops and elders were assigned the responsibilities of teaching and ruling the church, whereas the deacons were probably in charge of finance and relief work.[18] Most charismatic activities were now connected with the appointed office (2 Tim 1:6; 1 Tim 1:18; 4:14; cf. Jas 5:14).

Like the Deutero-Pauline writings and 1 Peter, attention is given in the Pastorals to household and community rules (Titus 2:1-10; 1 Tim 2; 5:1–6:2; cf. Col 3:18–4:1; Eph 5:21–6:9; 1 Pet 2:13–3:7). These are ethical standards and social relationships expected of all good citizens in the Roman world. They presuppose a situation where the church no longer has an imminent end-time expectation but is settling down to life in the Roman world.[19] In this context both faith and works were important (Titus 3:5, 8) and Greco-Roman social ethics were to be transformed by Christian love.[20]

In Paul's uncontested letters, we find a different view of leadership and ethics. In the Pauline congregations, leaders arose when they manifested the appropriate gifts of ruling and teaching (e.g., 1 Cor 12:27-30; 16:15; Rom 12:3-8). It is in this context that the early reference in Philippians to "overseers and helpers" (1:1) should be understood. Under the supervision of Paul and his coworkers, leaders

[18] Sampley et al., *Eph, Col*, 107–15; J. P. Meier, "*Presbyteros* in the Pastoral Epistles," *CBQ* 35 (1973): 323–45; R. E. Brown, "*Episkopē* and *Episkopos*: The NT Evidence," *TS* 41 (1980): 322–38; Aageson, *Paul, the Pastoral Epistles, and the Early Church*, 31–35, 52–55.

[19] P. Rogers, "The Pastoral Epistles as Deutero-Pauline," *ITQ* 45 (1978): 24860; Käsemann, *NT Questions*, 236–51; E. Schweizer, *Church Order in the NT*, SBT 32 (London: SCM, 1961), 77–88. Margaret Y. MacDonald, *The Pauline Churches: A Socio-Historical Study of the Institutionalization in the Pauline and Deutero-Pauline Writings*, SNTSMS 60 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); L. R. Donelson, *Pseudepigraphy and Ethical Argument in the Pastoral Epistles*, HUT 22 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1986).

[20] N. J. McEleney, "The Vice Lists of the Pastoral Epistles," *CBQ* 36 (1974): 203–19; C. J. Martin, "The *Haustafeln* (Household Codes) in African American Biblical Interpretation," in *Stony the Road*, ed. C. Felder (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 206–31. Sampley et al., *Eph, Col*, 1I7; Verner, *Household of God*; Eugene Boring, "Household Codes," *NIDB* 2, 890.

probably arose in all his churches (e.g., 1 Cor 16:15-16). These leaders were appointed *by God* (1 Cor 12:28). Those who question Paul's authorship of the Pastorals consider it unlikely that Paul himself was concerned with appointing "elders . . . in each church" (Acts 14:23). They connect this reference with the later perspective of the author of Luke and Acts. It is plausible, however, that an elder system was developed in the Jerusalem church, patterned after the Sanhedrin and synagogue (Gal 2:9; Acts 15:2-6, 22f.).[21]

In response to this tendency to divide the Pastorals' vision of the church from that in the uncontested letters of Paul, Luke T. Johnson notes that 2 Timothy is silent on church organization, while what is found in Titus is quite minimal and is not simply pasted in from 1 Timothy. So all must acknowledge that it is tendentious to speak of an organized system of church organization in all three Pastorals. Johnson also points out that the uncontested letters of Paul use the titles of bishops and deacons and that the phenomenon that 1 Timothy and Titus explicitly address how a church is to be structured may arise from the occasion of these particular letters,[22] rather than from their possible composition by a different author at a later time. Johnson also notes that the early church was critical regarding pseudonymous writings associated with Paul. It did not canonize the early writings we know as *3 Corinthians*, *Laodiceans*, *Letters of Paul and Seneca*, and the *Acts of Paul and Thecla*.[23]

Another option in navigating through these differences is to view the Pastoral Letters as compilations of material available in a school for pastors. Genuine notes or letter sections from Paul are preserved, along with other teachings related to how churches should be led. This is a middle course between the positions definitively in favor

[21] Sampley et al., *Eph, Col*, 111; R. F. Collins, "Elder in the NT," *NIDB* 2, 226.

[22] Johnson, *First and Second Timothy*, 85–94; Towner outlines some of the issues addressed in each "ad hoc letter," *Letters*, 28–29.

[23] Rom 16:1 (applied to a woman); 1 Cor 16:15-17; Gal 6:6; Phil 1:1; Col 4:17; 1 Thess 5:12. Johnson, *Writings of the NT*, 427, 429; *idem*, *Among the Gentiles* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), chap. 15. For a list of noncanonical Pauline pseudepigraphs, see *Pauline Canon*, ed. S. E. Porter (Atlanta: SBL, 2004), 138–50. For lists and catalogues of NT collections, see *Canon Debate*, ed. McDonald and Sanders, appendix D.

Fig. 18: Icon of St. Titus, Gortis, Crete. Image by C. Puskas.

of Pauline authorship and those against it.[24]

Paul, like the postapostolic writers, also employed Hellenistic ethical instructions, but his rationale for using them was different. First, they were ethics practiced in preparation for the soon approaching day of the Lord (1 Thess 5:1-11; 1 Cor 7:29-31). Vice lists were descriptions of those who would not inherit the kingdom of God (Gal 5:19-21; 1 Cor 6:9-10). Paul's exhortations on subordination to earthly governments (Rom 13:1-10) and his caution about changes in social status (1 Cor 7:17-24) were also conditioned by his imminent end-time expectation (Rom 13:11-14; 1 Cor 7:29-31). Second, Paul's lists of virtues may be read to show that he viewed virtues as manifestations of the believer's new status in union with Christ. They were to demonstrate the believer's death to sin and awakened life to righteousness, symbolized in Christian baptism (Rom 6:5-11). They were also to be the signs of the Spirit who dwells in the believer (Gal 5:16, 22-26; 1 Cor 6:19-20). Those who have difficulties with Pauline authorship of the Pastorals find the virtues in them to be what one must learn and perfect in order to merit salvation. These critics are influenced by a Protestant soteriology, emphasizing that the ethics of both the Deutero-Pauline letters and the Pastorals lack Paul's

[24] Miller, *Pastoral Letters as Composite Documents*, 138–58; Marshall, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 83–84; against Miller, cf. Van Neste, *Cohesion and Structure*, whose conclusions seem to argue for coherent compositions rather than compilations of disparate Pauline materials.

eschatological perspective and mystical dimension and, thus, cannot have been written by him.

These classic, twentieth-century arguments against Pauline authorship of the Pastorals assume that one can draw boundaries around a genuinely Pauline theology and then eliminate what seems outside those boundaries. There is room for argument here regarding what should be regarded as essentially Pauline. Allowance must also be made for the differences in content and style evident when a given author is writing in different epistolary occasions.

Conclusions

Taken together, the chronological, linguistic, doctrinal, and ecclesiastical differences of the Pastorals compared with the undisputed Pauline letters are definitely worth considering when we pose the authorship question to these letters. What academic scholarship since the nineteenth century has concluded about the Pastorals as late compositions after Paul's lifetime, however, still remains an issue today. In our treatment of these differences in the context of earliest Christianity, we will also include possible similarities to, or ideas that may have originated with, Paul and the so-called "Deutero-Pauline writings."

Historical Settings

The concerns of the Pastorals have routinely been viewed since the nineteenth century as coinciding with those of emerging orthodoxy.[25] In the Pastorals we discover conflicts with false teachings, a more established organizational structure, the preserving of the apostolic tradition, creedal statements and confessions of faith, and more standardized or normative Christian ethics. While we shall remain open to this frame of reference for reading the Pastorals, we need to keep our eyes open to the phenomena that the three letters we so easily group together as the

[25] See my discussion of characteristics of emerging orthodoxy in C. B. Puskas and C. M. Robbins, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 2nd ed. (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2011), 228, 243–55. See also W. Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971); E. Käsemann, "Paul and Early Catholicism" in *idem*, *NT Questions Today* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), 236–51. Aageson advocates a more complex, variegated approach in *Paul, the Pastoral Epistles, and the Early Church*, 209–10.

Pastorals actually have significant variations in their views of church life. For example, there is much in 2 Timothy that is missing in both 1 Timothy and Titus, and what the latter two have in common is not found in 2 Timothy.[26] Although there has been much effort to provide a single setting of emerging orthodoxy and orthopraxy that explains all three letters, it is best to respect the literary and theological variety of 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus. This will be done in our discussion of genre and rhetorical function (pp. 239–42).

False Teaching

As is the case with 2 Corinthians, the polemics against heresy seem directed against Judaistic tendencies in Titus and 1 Timothy (Titus 1:10, 14; 1 Tim 1:7-11; 4:3) and what might be called "Gnostic tendencies" in all three letters (Titus 3:9; 1 Tim 4:35, 7; 6:20; 2 Tim 2:18). These errors are not confronted by forceful debate as in Galatians 3 or 2 Corinthians 11 but seem to be labeled as foolish and contrasted to the truth (e.g., 1 Tim 1:3-7).[27] One of the functions of 1 Timothy in its epistolary occasion thus seems to be that it will enable a church leader to identify heresies by their vices and thus reject them without entering into polemical debates.[28]

In the second and third centuries, we know of Judaistic Christians, called the Ebionites, who maintained a rigid adherence to the Law of Moses (cf. 1 Tim 1:7-11) and viewed Christ as a great human prophet *(Pseudo-Clementine Homilies*; *The Gospel of the Hebrews*; Eusebius, *Eccl Hist* 3.27). Perhaps 1 Timothy and Titus give evidence of this strain of Christianity, just as we see similar questions regarding observance of Jewish law earlier in Galatians or 2 Corinthians, and questions regarding Jesus' deity perhaps in 1 Corinthians, chapters 8 and 12 (8:1-6; 12:1-3).

The Valentinian and Basilidian Gnostics of the second century developed elaborate theological explanations of the cosmos (cf. "myths and endless genealogies," 1 Tim 1:4; 4:7). Such groups also advocated ascetic practices (cf. 1 Tim 4:3-4) and maintained the belief that a spiri-

[26] Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul*, 357.

[27] It must be noted here that such an approach is not foreign to the "authentic" Paul one can see in Romans 3:5-8.

[28] Koester, *Introduction* 2, 304; McEleney, "Vice Lists," 203–19; Collins, *Letters That Paul Did Not Write*, 108, 127.

tual resurrection had already taken place, tendencies probably present in first-century Corinth and perhaps in Thessalonica (1 Cor 4:8; 7:1-2; 15:12-57; 2 Thess 2:1-2; 2 Tim 2:18).[29]

Possible references to a Marcionite heresy can also be found in the Pastorals. The mention of "contradictions (*antitheses*) of the false *gnosis*" (1 Tim 6:20) seems to refer to the *Antitheses* written by Marcion (140).[30] In it, Christ's abolishment of human traditions and Paul's teaching of freedom from the law are posited against both the Creator God and Mosaic Law of the Jewish Scriptures. The appeal to the goodness of God's creation (1 Tim 4:4) and the mention of "all Scripture is God-breathed" (2 Tim 3:16) may also be seen as a polemic against Marcion.[31]

If not directed against Marcion, perhaps these polemics were directed against an earlier opponent holding similar views or may indicate that problems were beginning to surface here that later became associated with Marcion. It cannot be ruled out, however, that these very teachings in the Pastoral Letters were later read by Marcion himself, challenging his own views and prompting him to exclude them from his list of authoritative writings as Tertullian seems to indicate.[32]

Regarding the pastoral concerns about the relations of men and women in the church, Dennis R. MacDonald has suggested the following thesis. Ascetic traditions of female itinerant preachers like Thecla

[29] Further information on second-century Gnosticism can be found in, e.g., Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 1.1–9, 24; Hippolytus, *Refutation* 7.10–15; 10.9–10; Epiphanius, *Panarion* 1.24, 31; Jonas, *Gnostic Religion*; Rudolph, *Gnosis, Nag Hammadi, Gnosticism, and Early Christianity*, ed. C. W. Hedrick and R. Hodgson (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1986).

[30] For a reconstruction of Marcion's *Antitheses*, see Meeks and Fitzgerald, *St. Paul* (2007), 286–88.

[31] John Barton argues that Marcion was a conservative not an innovator, "Marcion Revisited," in *Canon Debate*, ed. McDonald and Sanders, 341–54.

[32] See his citation from late second century: "To this epistle alone [Philemon] did its brevity avail to protect it against the falsifying hands of Marcion. I wonder, however, when he received (into his *Apostolicon*) this letter which was written but to one man, that he rejected the two epistles to Timothy and the one to Titus, which all treat of ecclesiastical discipline. His aim, was, I suppose, to carry out his interpolating process even to the number of (St. Paul's) epistles." (Tertullian, *Against Marcion* 5.21, ET from ANF 3:473–4, [Philemon] supplied by us from context).

(in *The Acts of Paul and Thecla*) were circulated orally by these women and were perceived as disrupting the household and dividing the church (1 Tim 2:11-15; 4:1-3; 2 Tim 3:6-7). There are, of course, other ways of interpreting these pastoral concerns.[33]

While the heresies of the Pastorals thus have ample precedents within the letters of 1–2 Corinthians and Galatians, some of the heresies mentioned appear to be organically related to those of the second and third centuries, allowing many to view the Pastoral Letters as second-century compositions and thus therefore not part of the "pure gospel" of the uncontested Pauline letters.[34] Based on the clues in the texts themselves, it is likely that some form of these later heresies were surfacing when the Pastorals were written, though it is tendentious to fix the stages of development between what is reflected in Galatians (for example) and that seen in "mature" heresies of second and third centuries from the passing references to errors in 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus.

Established Leadership

Two sets of criteria for appointed bishops, elders, and deacons can be seen in 1 Timothy and Titus. Excluding the reference to a plurality of elders and one bishop in Titus 1:5-7, there is no other evidence of a single bishop supported by a council of elders and assisted by deacons such as we find in Ignatius's letters of the early second century (e.g., Ign *Smyrn* 8:1; *Magn* 6.1; *Trail* 7.2). Either the Pastorals preceded this early second-century monoepiscopal structure or it had not yet been instituted in the localities they addressed. The admonition that

[33] *The Legend and the Apostle: The Battle for Paul in Story and Canon* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1983), 54–63. On differing views regarding the Pastorals and the Acts of Paul, see Aageson, *Paul, the Pastoral Epistles, and the Early Church*, 7–8, 193–206. For a less polemic view, see David M. Scholer, "1 Tim 2:9-15 and the Place of Women in the Church's Ministry," *Feminist Companion to the Deutero-Pauline Epistles*, ed. A. J. Levine (Cleveland: Pilgrim, 2003), 98–121.

[34] The second- and third-century heresies would be those we find in Justin Martyr, *First Apology*; Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*; the polemics of Tertullian, Hippolytus, and Epiphanius. See *A Companion to Second-Century Christian "Heretics,"* ed. A. Marjanen and P. Luomanen (Leiden: Brill, 2008); *Paul and His Opponents*, ed. S. E. Porter (Atlanta: SBL, 2005).

a bishop "must not be a new convert" (1 Tim 3:6) and the extensive lists of household and community rules (e.g., Titus 2; 1 Tim 3) presuppose a church situation where there are second- and third-generation Christians, consonant with what we find in the canonical portrait of Timothy (Acts 16:1-3; e.g., 2 Tim 1:5; 2:1-2).

Preserving Apostolic Tradition

The dominant themes of teaching "sound doctrine" (1 Tim 1:10; 6:3; 2 Tim 1:13; 4:3; Titus 1:9, 13; 2:1, 8) and guarding "what has been entrusted" (1 Tim 6:20; 2 Tim 1:14) reflect a concern to preserve the apostolic tradition. In 2 Timothy 2:1-2, Paul entrusts Timothy with apostolic traditions and he must pass them on to "faithful men,"[35] who then must hand them down to "others." This process presupposes possibly four generations: Paul, Timothy, faithful men, others (if "others" refers to a subsequent generation). The trajectory of apostolic concern for the passing on of tradition in earliest Christianity begins with Paul (1 Cor 11:2; 15:3; 2 Thess 2:15; 1 Clem 42; Ign *Magn* 13; Justin Martyr, *Apology*, 1.66–67).

Creeds and Confessions

Creedal statements and confessions are also evident in the Pastorals (e.g., 1 Tim 3:16; 6:11-16; 2 Tim 2:5-6, 11-13; Titus 3:47). Even though some probably originated as hymns in earlier worship settings, such as might be present in some of Paul's other letters (Phil 2:5-11; Eph 2:14-16; Col 1:15-20; 1 Tim 3:16), they became a dominant feature of what came to be viewed as orthodox Christianity (1 Pet 3:18-19, 22; Ign *Magn* 9; 13; Ign *Smyrn* 1–2; Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 3.4.2; Tertullian, *Against Praxeas*).

Ethical Norms

In order to ensure sound doctrine ("orthodoxy"), Titus and 1 Timothy emphasize the importance of right living ("orthopraxy"). These

[35] We have retained here the RSV translation instead of the NRSV "faithful people," to underscore the concern in much of the Pastorals for the ordering of male and female relations in the church; for helpful discussion here, see Margaret Y. MacDonald, "The Religious Lives of Women in Early Christianity," in *Women's Bible Commentary*, 640–47.

ethical norms for every member and class in the congregation (Titus 2; 1 Tim 3) are found in numerous writings of Paul and later Christians (e.g., Rom 12:9-21; Gal 5:13–6:10; Eph 5:22–6:9; Col 3:18–4:1; Pet 2:13–3:7; *Did* 4.9–11; *Barn* 19.5–7; *1 Clem* 21.6–9; Pol *Phil* 4.2–6.3). Here Paul becomes a model or paradigm of the ethical life (1 Tim 1:3-20; 2 Tim 1:3-18; 3:1–4:8) and the ideal of good citizenship is presented (1 Tim 2:2; 3:8).

Places of Origins and Destinations

Place of Origins

We do not know where the letters were written. It can be argued that 1 and 2 Timothy reflect a situation in Ephesus and Titus in Crete. Second Timothy purports to come from Rome (1:17), but it also could have been written from Ephesus. Thus the location of the author of all three letters could be Rome, Ephesus, or somewhere else.[36]

Destinations

It is assumed that Timothy has responsibility for the community in Ephesus (1 Tim 1:3-4). Second Timothy 1:18 mentions Ephesus and Onesiphorous, greeted in 4:19, who seems to be an Ephesian Christian.[37] Titus is left by the apostle in Crete to complete unfinished business and appoint elders in every town (Titus 1:5). This assignment seems to reflect an early stage of the churches in Crete.[38] Some scholars argue that the general nature of the polemics and church rules in the (post-Pauline) Pastorals are for Christians over a broad geographical area.[39] Following the post-Pauline argument here, the author(s) was (were) most familiar with the Aegean Sea region. Probably he (they) and his (their) addressees lived somewhere in this area. Since the Pastorals do not presuppose a monepiscopal system, their origin and destination may have preceded or been outside the sphere of Ignatius. Macedonia, Achaia, Ephesus, and Crete would all be suitable destinations.

[36] Trebilco, *Ephesus*, 205.

[37] Ibid., 206.

[38] Towner, *Letters*, 679.

[39] Dibelius and Conzelmann, *Pastoral Epistles*, 66. Trebilco challenges this view in *Ephesus*, 207–9.

Dates

Conjectures on the dates of the Pastorals as postapostolic writings range from the end of Paul's life to the mid-second century. An early second-century date has been viewed as plausible because of the "advanced" forms of heresy, organizational structures, and normative ethics detected in the Pastorals. The allusive/elusive nature of the heresy references and the differences in normative statements on church structure between 1 Timothy, Titus, and 2 Timothy raise issues on the dating of the Pastorals as a group. The influence of Marcion in the churches (if he is opposed in the Pastorals) might have preceded his arrival in Rome (ca. 140; birth, ca. 85). The monepiscopal system in Ignatius (98–117) was probably not yet adopted by the churches addressed in the Pastorals, although Timothy 1:5-7 may suggest a movement in this direction. A middle position in the continuum related to dating that located Titus, 1 Timothy, and 2 Timothy in the late first century is not implausible.

The Genre and Rhetorical Function

Titus and 1 Timothy

The books of Titus and 1 Timothy contain most of the literary forms found in the Deutero-Pauline and so-called General Epistles. They both begin and end like letters. Both contain household and community rules. When the qualifications for appointed church leaders are considered, Titus and 1 Timothy have the appearance of a church manual, like the *Didache* (ca. 100), which also has warnings against false prophets. Because they anticipate problems in the future and their parenetic emphasis has an advisory aim, Titus and 1 Timothy have a deliberative function. Like 1 Corinthians 7–16, 2 Corinthians 8–9, and Hebrews, they are concerned with the expedient goal of persuading their readers in the faith and dissuading them from unacceptable views and practices. Most parenetic literature has this deliberative aim. Details supporting this view will be given in the outline.

2 Timothy

As John 14–17 and 2 Peter function as final testaments for Jesus and Peter,[40] Acts 20:17-38 and 2 Timothy function as final testaments of the

[40] Other examples of ancient farewell speeches are: Gen 47:29–49:33; Josh 22:24; Deut 31–33; 1 Chr 28–29; Tob 14:3-11; *T12Patr*; *I Enoch* 91–104;

apostle Paul. Second Timothy has all the characteristics of this popular genre: (a) ethical admonitions of the departing apostle/father to his children in the faith, summarizing his own instructions to be followed in the future with attached eschatological warnings; (b) revelations of the future, predicting the destiny of the church, often as a revelation of the last days and providing a basis for further ethical exhortations. And perhaps as with 2 Peter and all final testaments, so also 2 Timothy is ascribed to the departing leader years after his death. The personal statements, travel plans, greetings, and other epistolary features also give 2 Timothy more characteristics of a Pauline letter than Titus or 1 Timothy, a characteristic that fits with the close correspondence in vocabulary between 2 Timothy and the uncontested letters noted above.

As a testament in epistolary form, 2 Timothy (like 2 Peter) is concerned with intensifying adherence to common values (epideictic rhetoric).[41] Like 2 Peter, it contains the following features of demonstrative rhetoric: (a) the call to remember (2 Tim 1:3, 5; 2 Pet 1:13, 15; 3:1), (b) the censure of opponents (2 Tim 3; 2 Pet 2) as the negative aspect of praising common values, and (c) autobiographical allusions used to support the thesis of extolling common values (2 Tim 1:11-18; 3:10-11; 4:6-21; 2 Pet 1:12-18). Further details are found in the rhetorical outline.

The Original Order of the Pastorals

The original arrangement of the Pastoral Letters was probably Titus, 1 Timothy, and 2 Timothy for the following reasons. First, the

---

4 Ezra 14:836; 2 Bar 78–86; *Jub* 10; 20–22; 30–36; *Adam and Eve* 25–29; Josephus *Ant* 4.8.4547; John 13:31–17:26; *Acts of John* 106–7; *Acts of Peter* 36–39; *Acts of Thomas* 159–60; farewell dialogue of Socrates in Plato's *Phaedo*. See also: W. Kurz, "Luke 22 and Farewell Addresses," *JBL* 104, no. 2 (1985): 251–68. Johnson sees in the paraentic style of the letter Paul fashioning himself as Timothy's spiritual father, providing a model for Timothy to imitate, *Letters* (2001), 320–24; *idem*, *Letters to Delegates*, 37–41.

[41] A farewell speech extolling common virtues is labeled by Menander (300 CE) as *ho syntaktikos logos* (*Rhetoric* 2.15). Specific examples are the farewell speech of Jesus in John 13:31–17:26, Paul's farewell speech in Acts 20:17-38, and the farewell address to Origen by Gregory Thoumaturgos in 328 CE. See Kennedy, *NT Rhetorical Criticism* (1984), 76, and *idem*, *Classical Rhetoric and Its Christian and Secular Traditions from Ancient to Modern Times* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 140–41.

lengthy prescript of Titus seems to function as the exordium of all three writings (see outline of Titus for allusions to 1 and 2 Tim).[42] Second, this appears to be the order in the Muratorian Fragment: "one to Titus and two to Timothy" (second or fourth century CE). Titus also has the earliest papyrus recognition (p^{32} ca. 200). Third, the similar contents of Titus and 1 Timothy indicate that they belong together. Furthermore, 1 Timothy adds qualifications for deacons and further community rules, possibly indicating that it is a redaction and expansion of earlier material in Titus.[43] Fourth, 1 Timothy's lack of personal Pauline notes (i.e., insufficient credibility) and the abrupt ending of 1 Timothy 6:20-21a anticipate 2 Timothy. The Muratorian Fragment also combined them. Furthermore, 1 and 2 Timothy seem to telescope into one another. Fifth, as the final testament of Paul it is rhetorically appropriate for 2 Timothy to serve as the climactic summary (peroration) of the Pastoral collection.

Why Three?

The three Pastoral Letters are usually thought to have been written about the same general period of time and to function as a single book like the seven letters that open Revelation.[44] There are several plausible reasons for writing three letters. First, a credible testimony (Titus 1:13) must come from "two or *three* witnesses" (1 Tim 5:19/Deut 19:15; cf. 1 Tim 6:12; 2 Tim 2:2). Second, regarding their rhetorical

[42] Themes found in Titus 1:1-4 that are developed in all three books are: apostleship and servanthood of Paul, faith of God's elect, full knowledge of the truth, godliness, hope of eternal life, *kerygmata*, God's promise before times eternal, God our Savior, my son in the faith, and grace and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. The following work also argues that Titus originally stood at the head of this collection, see Quinn, *The Letter to Titus*. W. H. Gloer organizes the Pastorals according to size, beginning with Titus, in his *1 & 2 Timothy-Titus* (2010), 1, 15–16.

[43] "Titus apparently contains directives for more recently established churches, whereas 1 Timothy contains directives for older, established communities. From this perspective, Titus may well have been written before 1 Timothy," Collins, *Letters That Paul Did Not Write*, 111.

[44] J. D. Quinn, "The Last Volume of Luke: The Relation of Luke-Acts to the Pastoral Epistles," in *Perspective on Luke-Acts*, 62–75. Quinn's theory of Luke's authorship of the Pastorals has not found much support; see history of discussion in Towner, *Letters*, 87, and Collins, *Letters That Paul Did Not Write*, 91–2.

structure, Titus and 1 Timothy are deliberative writings with 1 Timothy expanding upon Titus. As epideictic rhetoric, 2 Timothy functions as a fitting peroration to the corpus by extolling common virtues and values presupposed in all three. Second Timothy as demonstrative rhetoric seeks to affect the listener in the present with some of the expedient concerns of the future found in Titus and 1 Timothy. Third, most farewell speeches address a designated plurality of listeners, whether it is two or more sons, a gathering of friends, or a nation. As the concluding appeal of the Pastorals viewed as an integral group of letters, 2 Timothy indirectly has Paul the "apostolic father" addressing his two designated "sons in the faith," Titus and Timothy (as well as the implied audience of the church). This designated plurality of listeners (Titus and Timothy) makes Paul's farewell address more than a personal correspondence between Paul and Timothy.

The Rhetorical Structure of the Letters

Titus

As a form of deliberative address, the thesis of Titus is concerned with directives on appointing worthy leaders to withstand opposition. The title, "Training for Christian Life,"[45] captures the advisory aim of the book.[46] The epistolary prescript (1:1-4) also functions as the exordium for all the Pastoral Epistles.

The Rhetorical Structure of Titus

I.	Epistolary prescript: exordium	1:1-4
	A. Sender (ethos)	
	1. Authority of sender conveyed by his apostolic titles (1 Tim 1:1; 2 Tim 1:1)[47]	v. 1a

[45] Hanson, *The Pastoral Letters* (London, 1966), 106–23 (section on "Titus").

[46] For helpful interpretive suggestions on difficult verses, we have consulted: R. G. Bratcher, *A Translator's Guide to Paul's Letters to Timothy and Titus* (London: United Bible Societies, 1983); Fee, *1 and* 2 *Timothy, Titus* (1989); Quinn, *The Letter to Titus*; and the commentaries by Collins, Johnson, Marshall, and Towner.

[47] The exordium also recalls the superior-subordinate relation typical of royal correspondence (e.g., Trajan to Pliny), see Towner, *Letters*, 34–35.

2. The function of his office "to further the faith of God's elect" (cf. 2 Tim 2:10) establishes credibility with his addressee — v. 1b
3. The trustworthiness of his work is rooted in its eternal hope (cf. 1 Tim 1:1) that God promised ages ago and has now revealed in Paul's preaching — vv. 1c-3a
4. The divine authority of Paul's preaching is confirmed by the "command of God our Savior" (cf. 1 Tim 1:1; 2:3) — v. 3b

B. Addressee
Goodwill of "Titus" secured with epithet "my loyal child in a common faith" (*koinēn pistin*, AT) — v. 4a

C. Salutation
Ornamental to set reader in a favorable frame of mind (cf. 1 Tim 1:2) — v. 4b

II. Propostion

A. Statement of thesis: appoint worthy leaders to refute the opponents — 1:5-9
1. Occasion of the letter: when Paul left Titus in Crete — v. 5a
2. Opening directives on the unfinished task of appointing qualified elders — vv. 5b-6
3. Supporting reason: because the bishop[48] must manage God's household well by *teaching sound doctrine* and *refuting opponents* — vv. 7-9

B. Supporting reason for thesis: the appearance of dangerous false teachers who must be refuted — 1:10-16

III. Proof — 2:1–3:11

A. Positive advice on teaching what agrees with sound doctrine — 2:1-15
1. Topic statement — v. 1

[48] The uninterrupted movement of discussion from elder to bishop (Titus 1:5-7) seems to imply that they are synonymous here for the same office, "the elder as the overseer of God's household." Collins, "Elder in the NT," *NIDB* 2, 226.

2. Exposition of topic: ethical instructions for various groups — vv. 2-10
3. Supporting reason: the universal gospel as the theological basis for renouncing evil and leading a godly life — 2:11-14
4. Peroration of topic statement: "exhort and reprove with all authority" — v. 15

B. Further positive instructions on godly behavior — 3:1-8
1. Topic statement on teaching obedience, goodness, and kindness — vv. 1-2
2. First supporting reason: For we were once sinners but are now saved and transformed to be heirs of eternal life — vv. 3-8a
3. Second supporting reason: so that believers may devote themselves to good works — v. 8b-c
4. Third supporting reason (*advantage*): "These things are excellent and profitable [*ōphelima*] for everyone" — v. 8d

C. Closing negative admonition to avoid controversies, dissensions, and the wicked who cause them — 3:9-11
1. List of these vices to avoid — v. 9a
2. Supporting advantage: "for they are unprofitable [*anōpheleis*] and worthless" (contrast of v. 8d) — v. 9b
3. Recommended procedure on confronting those who cause factions, linking Paul's authority with that of Jesus (Matt 18:15-17) — vv. 10-11

IV. Peroration: Personal requests and appeals — 3:12-15

A. Personal requests (pathos) — vv. 12-13
1. Paul's plans to send a fellow worker (Artemas or Tychicus) to Titus — v. 12a
2. His request for Titus to join him in Nicopolis, Achaia — v. 12b
3. Paul's request for Titus to return Zenas and Apollos — v. 13

B. Personal appeal restating thesis: "let our people learn to apply themselves to good deeds for necessary [*anagkaia*] needs so that they are not *unproductive*" (like those causing factions) — v. 14

C. Greetings *topoi* securing the favor of the sender, addressee, and mutual acquaintances — v. 15a

D. Benediction (securing favor): "Grace be with *all* of you" (second person plural) — v. 15b

1 Timothy

First Timothy continues the approach of deliberative advice by further elaboration on Titus. Its main concern is providing advice on guarding the faith against false teachers. But successful opposition to false teaching must also be maintained by qualified leaders (bishops, elders, deacons) who will promote sound doctrine and practice. Furthermore, to insure "orthodoxy" and "orthopraxy," the congregations must also be in order (household and community rules). All of these subsequent statements are topics relevant to the thesis of fighting the good fight by keeping the faith (1:18-19; cf. 1:3-7).

The Rhetorical Structure of 1 Timothy

I.	Epistolary prescript: proem	1:1-2
	A. Sender and addressee	
	1. Ethos of sender conveyed	v. 1
	2. Goodwill of addressee secured	v. 2a
	B. Salutation	
	(Ornamental to set reader in a favorable frame of mind; cf. 2 John 3; Titus 1:4b; 2 Tim 1:2b)	v. 2b
II.	Proposition: Oppose false teachings	1:3-7
	A. Occasional directive: "Stay in Ephesus as I urged you on my way to Macedonia" (GNB)	v. 3a
	B. Thesis: "Order certain people to stop teaching false doctrines"	vv. 3b-4b
	C. The stated purpose of Paul's charge—"to arouse love that comes from a pure heart, a clear conscience and a genuine faith" (GNB)	v. 5
	D. Descriptions of false teachers who have turned away from the above virtues	(v. 5) 1:6-7
III.	Refutation of opposing view (i.e., the law as a source of speculation and instruction for Christians, cf. 1:7)	1:8-11
	A. Opening premise: the law is good (*kalos*) if used as it was intended to be used	v. 8
	B. Concluding principle: the law is intended for the lawless not the righteous	vv. 9-11
	—the gospel entrusted to Paul is the basis of "sound doctrine"	v. 11
IV.	Background narration: Paul's experience of God's grace as a model for others (cf. Gal 1:13-24)	1:12-17
	A. Opening statement: Paul's gratitude to Christ for appointing him as a minister (ethos)	v. 12

	B. Paul's former life and his experience of divine grace recounted (pathos)	1:13-14
	C. Confessional statement and personal application	v. 15
	D. The dual purpose of Paul's salvation:	
	1. To demonstrate God's forbearance in redeeming sinners	
	2. To provide a pattern for believers after Paul	v. 16
	E. Doxology to "the king of ages"	v. 17
V.	Proof	1:18–6:2
	A. Recapitulation of thesis	1:18-20
	1. Opening address to Timothy whose appointment was confirmed by prophetic utterances	v. 18a
	2. Thesis stated: "that you might wage good warfare by keeping your faith and a clear conscience" (military imagery; cf. 6:12)	1:18b-19a
	3. Negative examples of people who have destroyed their faith by not listening to their conscience	vv. 19b-20
	B. First section on prayer, women, and church leaders	2:1–3:16
	1. First topic: directives on praying for the salvation of all peoples	2:1-8
	This action is good (*kalon*) and acceptable (*apodekton*) before God (vv. 3-4; deliberative appeal). Concluding exhortation on where and how the men should pray	(v. 8)
	2. Second topic: the behavior of women in the church[49]	2:9-15

[49] It has been argued that women were involved in the false teachings, which necessitated this "occasional injunction" by the author: "let women be silent in the church." See R. and C. Kroeger, "May Women Teach? Heresy in the Pastoral Epistles," *The Reformed Journal* (October 1980), 14–18. Dennis R. MacDonald has suggested that perhaps ascetic traditions like those in *The Acts of Paul and Thecla* were circulated orally by these women and were perceived as divisive by the author (1 Tim 2:11-15; 4:1-3; 2 Tim 3:6-7), *The Legend and the Apostle* (1983), 54–63. For a more moderate view, see David M. Scholer, "1 Tim 2.9-15 and the Place of Women in the Church's Ministry," *Feminist Companion to the Deutero-Pauline Epistles*, ed. A. J. Levine (Cleveland: Pilgrim, 2003), 98–121. On the impact of paganism on the church, see

3. Third topic: qualifications for bishop (*episkopos*; Titus 1:7-9) 3:1-7
4. Fourth topic: qualifications for deacons 3:8-13
5. Peroration of first section and introduction to second section vv. 14-16
   a. Paul's travel plans: he hopes to visit Timothy soon but writes the following directives if he is delayed v. 14
   b. Summary of first section: "I wrote you these things . . . so that you might know how one ought to behave in God's household" v. 15
   c. Confessional hymn illustrating the mystery of our piety v. 16

C. Second section: false teachings, personal admonitions, and treatment of other believers 4:1–6:2
1. Topic reiterating proposition (1:3-7) and refutation (1:8-11): a rebuttal of false teachings 4:1-5
2. Various topics of personal admonitions to Timothy 4:6-16
   a. The *advantage* of implementing Paul's advice and avoiding wrong behavior 4:6-11
   b. Exhortations on youth, exemplary behavior, preaching, and teaching vv. 12-16
   c. Peroration: some positive advice with supporting advantages vv. 15-16
3. Topics on the treatment of other believers 5:1–6:2
   a. General advice on the manner of reproving various members 5:1-2
   b. Advice on widows: honor widows who are really alone vv. 3-16
   c. Instruction about the elders 5:17-25
   d. Instruction for slaves 6:1-2a

VI. Peroration 6:2b-10
A. Opening exhortation: "teach and urge these duties" v. 2b
B. Recapitulation of indictment on false teachers (cf. 1:3-11; 4:1-5) 6:3-10

S. H. Gritz, *Paul, Women, Teachers, and the Mother Goddess at Ephesus* (New York: University Press of America, 1991).

1. Opening statement on the foolishness of not following sound teaching — vv. 3-5
2. Correcting the misconception about godliness as a means of gain — (6-10)

C. Reiteration of exhortation to Timothy (6:11-21; cf. 1:18-19; 4:6-16; 5:21)
1. Opening statement: Avoid evil and strive for righteousness and godliness (cf. 4:7) — 6:11
2. Restatement of thesis employing athletic imagery (cf. 1:18b): "Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of eternal life" — v. 12
3. Restatement of solemn charge to keep the above commandment (cf. 5:21) — vv. 13-14
—amplification on the power and authority of the glorified Christ — vv. 15-16
4. Charge to those already rich, recalling admonitions against greed (3:3, 8; 6:5-10) — vv. 17-19
5. Final restatement of charge to guard the faith and avoid false teaching (recalling 1:3-4, 18-19; 4:7-10; 6:2b-11) — vv. 20-21
6. Benediction: "Grace be with you" (pl.), cf. Titus 3:15b (pathos conveyed in its abruptness) — v. 21b

2 Timothy

Second Timothy serves as the climactic peroration of the Pastorals. It is the farewell address of the departing apostle and seeks to intensify adherence to the common gospel (epideictic rhetoric). The title, "Character of a Christian Minister,"[50] epitomizes the laudatory aim of the book. Special use of ethos (character of author) and pathos (emotions conveyed to reader) are evident in this final testament where Paul as a spiritual father serves as a model to imitate (the paraenetic material). Allusions back to the previous letters of Titus and Timothy occur in the proof and peroration (as noted).

[50] A. T. Hanson, *Pastoral Letters*, 76–104.

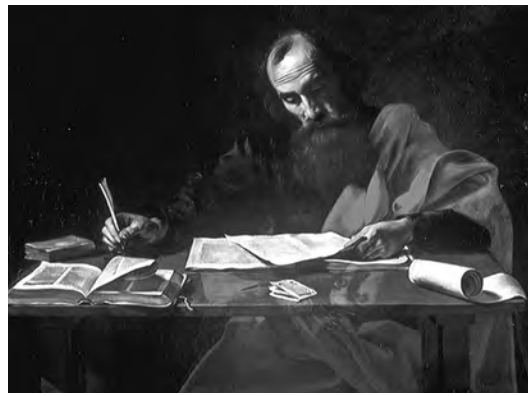


Fig. 19: Valentin de Boulogne, *Saint Paul Writing His Epistles*, c. 1618–20, oil on canvas. Blaffer Foundation Collection, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Texas.

The Rhetorical Structure of 2 Timothy

I.	Epistolary Prescript	1:1-2
	A. Sender and addressee	1:1-2a
	1. Ethos of sender conveyed by name, apostolic title, and divine authorization	
	2. Goodwill of addressee secured by epithet: "my beloved child"[51]	
	B. Salutation (ornamental to set reader in a favorable frame of mind, cf. 2 John 3)	
II.	Proem:[52] Prayer of thanksgiving	1:3-5
	A. Pathos conveyed by Paul's prayer-wish for Timothy's welfare and Paul's desire to visit him	vv. 3-4
	B. Mention of Timothy's "sincere faith" to set the addressee in favorable dispositions	v. 5
III.	Proposition: To intensify adherence to our common gospel	vv. 6-18
	A. Transition and introduction	vv. 6-7
	Opening exhortation to rekindle God's gift (*charisma*) of ministry	v. 6
	Supporting reason: "For God did not give us a spirit of cowardice . . ."	v. 7

[51] The father-son relation secures the goodwill of the beleaguered delegate to receive, embrace, and emulate the teachings and ministry of the apostle. See also 2 Tim 2:1; Titus 1:4; 1 Tim 1:2.

[52] The proem secures the sympathies of the addressee and reminds him of the common faith shared by addressee and the sender.

	B. Thesis: Remain loyal to our gospel	1:8-18
	1. Opening exhortation to testify and share in the suffering of *the gospel*	v. 8
	2. Amplification of topic: God's saving activity stated in *the gospel*	vv. 9-10
	3. Example of Paul's loyalty to *the gospel* (ethos, cf. 1 Tim 2:7)[53]	vv. 11-12
	4. Concluding exhortation to follow Paul's sound teaching (Gk. *logoi*) and guard the good treasure entrusted to you	vv. 13-14
	C. Examples of disloyalty and loyalty to our common gospel	vv. 15-18
IV.	Proof	2:1–3:17
	A. Recapitulation of thesis	2:1-7
	1. Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus (cf. 1:6)	2:1
	2. Entrust apostolic gospel to faithful people (cf. 1:13-4; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Tim 3)	v. 2
	3. Share in the suffering of the gospel (cf. 2 Tim 1:8)	v. 3
	—amplification of above topoi with military, athletic, and agricultural metaphors	vv. 4-6
	4. Concluding exhortation to consider what was stated with supporting reason (cf. 1:18)	v. 7
	B. The motives for the thesis	2:8-13
	1. Jesus Christ as preached in Paul's gospel	v. 8
	2. Paul's suffering for the gospel	vv. 9-10
	3. Blessings promised for loyalty and endurance (hymn with a series of premises and subsequent conclusions)	vv. 11-13
	C. First amplification of thesis topic: follow sound teaching (logoi) and guard the gospel (cf. 1:13-14) against profane and false teaching	2:14-19
	D. Second amplification of thesis topic: description of those disloyal to our common gospel (cf. 1:15)	3:1-9

[53] On Paul as a model of suffering (1:6-14), see Johnson, *Letters to Paul's Delegates*, 49–55.

	E. Third amplification of thesis topic: follow the example of Paul's loyalty (cf. 1:11-12)	3:10-17
V.	Peroration	4:1-22
	A. Reiteration of thesis in Paul's solemn charge to Timothy	4:1-5
	1. Introduction to solemn charge	v. 1
	2. Exhortation to proclaim the message (*logon*), be persistent, reprove, admonish, exhort	v. 2
	3. Supporting reason and reiteration of thesis: Future danger from those disloyal to the gospel	vv. 3-5
	4. Concluding exhortations to Timothy	v. 5
	B. Final reiteration of thesis: Paul's example of loyalty to the gospel (farewell address), both the ethos of Paul's noble character and the pathos of his endurance for the gospel are conveyed in this farewell address (cf. Titus 1:3; 1 Tim 2:7; 2 Tim 1:11)	4:6-8
	C. Personal appeals (pathos)	4:9-22
	1. Personal request and the mention of people disloyal and loyal to the gospel	vv. 9-13
	2. Caution enjoined against the one who opposed (1 Tim 1:20) the apostolic message (logoi cf. 2 Tim 1:13)	vv. 14-15
	3. The progress of Paul's court trial (pathos)	vv. 16-18
	4. Greetings topoi and more personal requests[54]	vv. 19-21
	5. Benediction (more elaborate than Titus and 1 Tim; leaving the reader in a favorable frame of mind	v. 22

Summary

In this chapter we discussed the authorship, historical setting, literary character, and rhetorical functions of 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus, labeled the "Pastoral Epistles" since the eighteenth century. The Pauline

[54] Peter Lampe sees historical inconsistencies here with the mention of Aquila and Priscilla back in Ephesus (2 Tim 4:19) after returning to Rome and forming a house church there (Rom 16:3-5). He concludes that the unknown author of 2 Timothy produced here a literary creation because he or she wanted/needed to include these prominent names in Ephesus, *From Paul to Valentinus: Christians at Rome in the First Two Centuries*, trans. Michael Steinhauser (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), 158–59.

authorship of the Pastorals is a puzzling issue because external evidence for their use before 150 CE is limited and there are differences between the undisputed Pauline writings and the Pastorals. These differences occur in the following areas: chronological, linguistic (although 2 Tim has some Pauline "language prints"), doctrinal, and ecclesiastical. Though the case against the Pauline authorship of the Pastoral Epistles has been championed for the last century and a half, differences among the Pastorals, their continuities with the undisputed Paulines, and the weaknesses of the "emerging Catholicism" model for Christianity now render this established view in academic circles less convincing.

One can thus date the Pastoral Letters as anywhere between the end of Paul's life and the mid-second century. An early second-century date has been plausible to many because of the impression that the Pastorals' passing allusions to heresies offer evidence of advanced forms of heresy (like Ebionite, Gnostic, Marcion), developed organizational structures (bishops, elders, deacons), and normative Christian ethics (household and community rules), despite the fact that there is some evidence for all these in the undisputed letters of Paul.

Titus and 1 Timothy share with the Deutero-Pauline writings and the General or Catholic Epistles many literary forms, such as standard epistolary conventions and household and community rules. Their added qualifications for church leaders give them the appearance of a church manual. Because they anticipate future problems and give advice through pareneses, both Titus and 1 Timothy have deliberative functions.

Second Timothy, which is a last testament of the apostle (like 2 Peter for Peter), has an epideictic function of extolling common values and censuring agreed-upon vices. As words of the departing apostle-father to his "son(s) in the faith," Paul is portrayed as imparting his religious and ethical values, which are to be practiced by his spiritual descendants in the future. Some scholars, such as Luke T. Johnson and Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, argue that the authentic voice of the apostle can be heard in this document.

The order of Titus, 1 Timothy, and then 2 Timothy was probably the original. This was the arrangement in the Muratorian Fragment. Titus 1:1-4 functions as the introduction to all three and belongs with 1 Timothy (which is a further elaboration of the earlier contents of Titus). The abrupt ending of 1 Timothy 6:20-21a anticipates 2 Timothy. This final testament of Paul (2 Tim) serves as the climactic peroration to the entire corpus. The employment of three Pastoral Letters is ap-

propriate rhetorically, legally (two or three witnesses, cf. 1 Tim 5:19), and generically (final testaments are usually addressed to more than one designated individual—e.g., a father to his children, a leader to his nation). As a final testament, 2 Timothy leaves behind a work to continue and a legacy upon which to build.

It was not our intent to lose the reader in the debates on authorship and the specific models of church organization inferred from these letters. We have tried to show the challenges of definitively answering the authorship question of these letters, whether they were composed by Paul, written by a later disciple, or compiled in a Deutero-Pauline school. The Pastoral Letters do give ample confirmation of Paul's emphasis that the Christian life can only be lived in community with other Christians in church and that each church is called to be in community with all other churches.[55] For centuries they have provided the church with encouragement, faith, and hope. May they continue to be a blessing to all who read them, now and in the years to come.

> *Ho kurios meta tou pneumatos sou. Hē charis meth' humōn.*
> (2 Tim 4:22; cf. Phlm 25)

[55] 1 Cor 1:1-3, 10-13; 3:1-4; 12:14-27; 1 Tim 3:15; 2 Tim 2:1-2, 20-21; Titus 3:10-11.

Bibliography

Abbreviations for journals, periodicals, major reference works, and series follow those of *The SBL Handbook of Style: For Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Early Christian Studies*, ed., Patrick H. Alexander et al. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1999) and also *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 15th ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003). For other abbreviations in our bibliography (e.g., WJK, TPI), see our list of abbreviations on pages vii–xviii. A more extensive bibliography of New Testament resources beyond those for the study of Paul can be found in Charles B. Puskas and C. Michael Robbins, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 2nd ed. (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2011).

Reference Works

The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary. 6 vols. Edited by David Noel Freedman. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992. Formerly *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, Doubleday.

Anderson, R. Dean, Jr. *Glossary of Greek Rhetorical Terms Connected to Methods of Argumentation: Figures and Tropes from the Anximenes to Quintilian*. CBET 24. Leuven: Peeters, 2000.

Aune, David E. *The New Testament in Its Literary Environment*. LEC. Edited by Wayne Meeks. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1987.

———. *The Westminster Dictionary of New Testament and Early Christian Literature and Rhetoric*. WJK, 2003.

Barrett, C. K. *The New Testament Background: Selected Documents*. New York: Harper & Row, 1961.

Bauer, Walter, Frederick William Danker, W. F. Arndt, and F. W. Gingrich, eds. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. Revised and edited by F. W. Danker. 3rd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000.

Blackman, Philip. *Mishnayoth: Pointed Hebrew Text, English Translation, Introductions, Notes, Supplement*. 7 vols. New York: Judaica Press, 1964.

Blass, Friedrich W., and Albert Debrunner. *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. Translated and revised by Robert. W. Funk with supplementary notes of A. Debrunner. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961.

Cartlidge, David R., and David L. Dungan, eds. *Documents for the Study of the Gospels*. Revised and enlarged ed. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994.

Champion, Craig. *Roman Imperialism: Readings and Sources*. London: Blackwell, 2003.

Charlesworth, James H., ed. *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Texts with English Translations*. Mohr Siebeck, 1994–.

———, ed. *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*. 2 vols. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983, 1985.

Collins, John J., and Daniel C. Harlow, eds. *Eerdmans Dictionary of Early Judaism*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010.

A Concordance to the Greek New Testament. Edited by William F. Moulton, Alfred S. Geden, and Harold K. Moulton. 6th rev. ed. I. Howard Marshall. T&T Clark Biblical Languages. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004.

Danby, Herbert. *The Mishnah: Translated from the Hebrew with Introduction and Brief Explanatory Notes*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1933.

Danker, Frederick W. *Benefactor: Epigraphic Study of a Graeco-Roman and New Testament Semantic Field*. St. Louis: Clayton Publishing House, 1982.

Deissmann, Adolf. *Light from the Ancient East: The New Testament Illustrated by Recently Discovered Texts of the Graeco-Romans World*. Translated by Lionel R. M. Strachan from the 1927 ed. of *Licht vom Osten*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1978.

Dictionary of Biblical Criticism and Interpretation. Edited by Stanley E. Porter. New York: Routledge, 2006.

Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation. Edited by R. J. Coggins and J. L. Houlden. London: SCM, 1990.

Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments. Edited by R. P. Martin and P. H. Davids. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1997.

Dictionary of Paul and His Letters. Edited by G. F. Hawthorne and R. P. Martin. Downers Grove, IVP, 1993.

Elliott, Neil, and Mark Reasoner, eds. *Documents and Images for the Study of Paul*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2011.

Evans, Craig A., ed. *Ancient Texts for New Testament Studies: A Guide to Background Literature*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2005.

Foerster, Werner. *Gnosis: A Selection of Gnostic Texts*. 2 vols. Translated by R. McL. Wilson. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972.

Holmes, Michael W., ed. *The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations*. 3rd ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2007.

Hornblower, Simon, and Anthony Spawforth, eds. *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*. 3rd ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996.

Hunt, Arthur S., and C. C. Edgar. *Select Papyri*, 2 vols. LCL. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1932.

The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible. Edited by George A. Buttrick. 4 vols. Nashville: Abingdon, 1962.

The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible Supplementary Volume. Edited by Keith Crim. Nashville: Abingdon, 1976.

Jobes, Karen, and Moises Silva. *Invitation to the Septuagint*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2005.

Kee, Howard Clark. *The New Testament in Context: Sources and Documents*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1984.

Kennedy, George A., trans. and ed. *Progymnasmata: Greek Textbooks of Prose Composition and Rhetoric*. Atlanta: SBL, 2003.

Kittel, Gerhard, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. Translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. 10 vols. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1977.

Kittel, Rudolf, Karl Elliger, Wilhelm Rudolph, Hans Peter Ruger, G. E. Weil, and A. Schenker, eds. *Torah, Neviim u-Khetuvim. Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*. 5th ed. Rev. ed. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1997.

Klauck, Hans-Josef. *Ancient Letters and the New Testament: A Guide to Context and Exegesis*. Translated and edited by Daniel P. Bailey. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2006.

———. *The Religious Context of Early Christianity: A Guide to Graeco-Roman Religions*. Translated by Brian McNeil. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003.

Lanham, Richard A. *A Handlist of Rhetorical Terms*. 2nd ed. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991.

Lee, John A. L. *A History of New Testament Lexicography*. Studies in Biblical Greek. Berlin: Peter Lang, 2003.

Lefkowitz, Mary R., and Maureen B. Fant. *Women's Life in Greece and Rome: A Source Book in Translation*. 3rd ed. Baltimore: John Hopkins, 2005.

Marcos, Natalio Fernandez. *The Septuagint in Context*. Translated by W. G. E. Watson. Leiden: Brill, 1998.

Marlowe, Michael D., ed. *Bible Research Internet Resources for Students of Scripture*. See online http://www.bible-researcher.com/index.html.

Martin, Ralph P., and David H. Edwards, eds. *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments*. IVP Bible Dictionary Series. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1997.

McLay, R. Timothy. *The Use of the Septuagint in New Testament Research*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003.

Meltzer, Edmund S., ed. *Letters from Ancient Egypt*. Translated by E. F. Wente. Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1990.

Moule, C. F. D. *An Idiom Book of NT Greek*. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971.

Moulton, James Hope. *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*. 4 vols. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1908–76. Vol. 1 (1908): *Prolegomena*, by J. H. Moulton; 1st ed. (1906); 3d ed. (1908). Vol. 2 (1929): *Accidence and Word Formation*, by Wilbert Francis Howard. Vol. 3 (1963): *Syntax*, by Nigel Turner. Vol. 4 (1976): *Style*, by N. Turner.

Moulton, James Hope, and George Milligan. *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament*. London: Macmillan, 1930; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1980.

Neusner, Jacob, Alan Avery-Peck, and William Scott Green, eds. *The Encyclopedia of Judaism*. 2nd ed. Leiden: Brill, 2005.

Neusner, Jacob, and William Scott Green, eds. *Dictionary of Judaism in the Biblical Period: 450 B.C.E to 600 C.E*. New York: Macmillan, 1996; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1999.

New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity. 9 vols. A review of the Greek inscriptions and papyri published in 1976–87 (in separate vols.). Edited by G. H. R. Horsley, S. R. Llewelyn, et al. The Ancient History Documentary Research Centre of Macquire University, North Ryde, N.S.W., Australia, 1981–2002. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998–2002.

The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible. 5 vols. Edited by Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, et al. Nashville: Abingdon, 2006–9.

New Testament History of Interpretation. Edited by John H. Hayes. Foreword by Edgar Krentz. Nashville: Abingdon, 2005.

Parry, Donald W., and Emanuel Tov, eds. *The Dead Sea Scrolls Reader*. 6 vols. Leiden: Brill, 2004.

Pietersma, Albert, and Benjamin G. Wright, eds. *A New English Translation of the Septuagint*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Pilch, John. *The Cultural Dictionary of the Bible*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1999.

Robinson, James M., ed. *The Nag Hammadi Library*. Rev. ed. New York: Harper Collins, 1990.

Schaps, David. *Handbook for Classical Research*. New York: Routledge, 2009.

Schiffman, Lawrence H., and James C. Vanderkam, eds. *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls*. 2 vols. Oxford University Press, 2000.

Schiffman, Lawrence H. *Texts and Traditions: A Source Reader for the Study of Second Temple and Rabbinic Judaism*. Hoboken: KTAV, 1998.

Schneemelcher, Wilhelm, ed. *New Testament Apocrypha*. Vol. 1, *Gospels and Related Writings*. Vol. 2, *Writings Related to the Apostles, Apocalypses, and Related Subjects*. English translation edition by R. McL. Wilson. Rev. ed. WJK, 2003.

Soulen, Richard N., and R. Kendall Soulen. *Handbook of Biblical Criticism*. 3rd ed. Revised and expanded. WJK, 2001.

Talbert, Richard J. A., ed., in collaboration with Roger S. Bagnall et al. *The Barrington Atlas of the Greek and Roman World*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000.

Theological Lexicon of the New Testament. Edited by Ceslas Spicq. 3 vols. Translated and edited by James D. Ernest from *Notes de lexicographie néo-testamentaire*. 1978, Fribourg ed. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994.

Wilson, Walter T. *Pauline Parallels*. WJK, 2009.

Commentaries of the New Testament

Bassler, Jouette M. *1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus*. ANTC. Nashville: Abingdon, 1996.

Beale, G. K., and D. A. Carson. *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2007.

Betz, Hans Dieter. *Galatians*. Hermeneia. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975.

Bird, Michael F. *Colossians, Philemon*. NCCS 12. Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2009.

Bock, Darrell L. *Acts*. BECNT. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book, 2007.

Bockmuehl, Markus. *The Epistle to the Philippians*. Black's NT Commentary. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1998.

Brown, Raymond E., Joseph A. Fitzmyer, and Roland E. Murphy, eds. *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1990.

Chance, J. Bradley. *Acts*. Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary. Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2007.

Ciamba, Roy E., and Brian S. Rosner. *The First Letter to the Corinthians*. PNTC. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010.

Cohick, Lynn H. *Ephesians*. NCCS 10. Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2010.

Collins, Raymond F. *1 & 2 Timothy and Titus*. NTL. WJK, 2002.

Cousar, Charles B. *Reading Galatians, Philippians, and 1 Thessalonians: A Literary & Theological Commentary*. Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2001.

———. *Philippians and Philemon: A Commentary*. NTL. WJK, 2009.

De Boer, Martinus C. *Galatians: A Commentary*. NTL. WJK, 2011.

Fee, Gordon D. *The First and Second Letters to the Thessalonians* NICNT. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009.

———. *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*. NICNT. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987.

———. *Paul's Letter to the Philippians*. NICNT. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995.

Fowl, Stephen E. *Ephesians*. NTL. WJK, 2012.

Gaventa, Beverly Roberts. *The Acts of the Apostles*. ANTC. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2003.

———. *First and Second Thessalonians*. WJK, 1998.

Gloer, W. Hulitt. *1 & 2 Timothy–Titus*. Macon, GA: Smyth and Helwys, 2010.

Gorday, Peter, ed. *Colossians, 1–2 Thessalonians, 1–2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon*. Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. NT IX. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2000.

Green, Gene L. *The Letters to the Thessalonians*. Pillar NTC. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002.

Hansen, G. Walter. *The Letter to the Philippians*. PNTC. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009.

Hoehner, Harold W. *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2002.

Holmes, Michael W. *1 and 2 Thessalonians: The NIV Application Commentary from Biblical Text to Contemporary Life*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1998.
Horsely, Richard A. *1 Corinthians*. ANTC. Nashville: Abingdon, 1998.
Hultgren, Arland. *Paul's Letter to the Romans: A Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011.
Jewett, Robert, assisted by Roy D. Kotansky. *Romans: A Commentary*. Hermeneia. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007.
Johnson, Luke T. *Acts of the Apostles*. SP 5. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1992.
———. *First and Second Letters to Timothy*. AYB 35A. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001.
———. *Letters to Paul's Delegates: 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus*. The New Testament in Context. TPI, 1996.
———. *Reading Romans: A Literary and Theological Commentary*. New York: Crossroad, 1997.
Keener, Craig S. *Romans*. NCC. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2009.
Kovacs, Judith L., ed. *1 Corinthians: Interpreted by Early Christian Commentators*. The Church's Bible. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005.
Levy, Ian Christopher, ed. *The Letter to the Galatians*. The Bible in Medieval Tradition. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011.
MacDonald, Margaret Y. *Colossians and Ephesians*. SP 17. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2000.
Malina, Bruce J., and John J. Pilch. *Social-Science Commentary on the Book of Acts*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008.
Marshall, I. Howard, and Philip Towner. *A Critical & Exegetical Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles*. ICC. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999.
Martyn, J. Louis. *Galatians*. AB 33A. New York: Doubleday, 1997.
Montague, George T. *First and Second Timothy, Titus*. Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008.
———. *The Letter of James*. PNTC. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000.
Moo, Douglas J. *Romans*. NICNT. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996.
O'Brien, Peter T. *The Letter to the Ephesians*. PNTC. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999.
Pervo, Richard I. *Acts: A Commentary*. Hermeneia. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008.
Pokorný, Petr. *Colossians: A Commentary*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991.
Quinn, Jerome D. *The Letter to Titus: A New Translation with Notes and Commentary and an Introduction to Titus, 1 and 2 Timothy*. AYB 35. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990.
Roetzel, Calvin J. *2 Corinthians*. ANTC. Nashville: Abingdon, 2007.
Snodgrass, Klyne. *Ephesians*. NIV Application Commentary. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996.

Sumney, Jerry L. *Colossians: A Commentary*. NTL. WJK, 2008.
Talbert, Charles H. *Ephesians and Colossians*. Paidea CNT. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2007.
———. *Reading Acts: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*. Rev. ed. Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2005.
Thiselton, Anthony C. *The Epistle to the Corinthians*. NIGTC. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000.
Williamson, Peter S. *Ephesians*. Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2009.
Witherington, Ben, III. *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997.
———. *1 and 2 Thessalonians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006.
———. *Grace in Galatia: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Galatians*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998.
———. *The Letters to Philemon, the Colossians, and the Ephesians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on the Captivity Epistles*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007.
———. *Paul's Letter to the Philippians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011.
Witherington, Ben, III, and Darlene Hyatt. *Paul's Letter to the Romans: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004.
Wright, N. T. *Romans*. Vol. 10, pp. 395–770. In *The New Interpreter's Bible*. Edited by Leander E. Keck. 12 vols. Nashville: Abingdon, 1994–2004.

Essays, Monographs, and Related Works

Aageson, James W. *Paul, the Pastoral Letters, and the Early Church*. Library of Pauline Studies. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2008.
Aasgaard, Reidar. *My Beloved Brothers and Sisters: Christian Siblingship in Paul*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004.
Adam, A. K. M., ed. *Postmodern Interpretations of the Bible: A Reader*. St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2001.
Adams, Edward, and David G. Horrell, eds. *Christianity at Corinth: The Quest for the Pauline Church*. WJK, 2004.
Alexander, Loveday C. A. *Acts in Its Ancient Literary Context: A Classicist Looks at the Acts of the Apostles*. London / New York: T&T Clark, 2005.
Anderson, R. Dean, Jr. *Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Paul*. Rev. ed. Leuven: Peeters, 1999.
Arnold, Clinton E. *The Colossian Syncretism: The Interface between Christianity and Folk Belief at Colossae*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1995.
Aune, David E. *Apocalypticism, Prophecy, and Magic in Early Christianity: Collected Essays*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008.

———, ed. *Greco-Roman Literature and the New Testament*. SBLSBS 21. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988.
———. *Prophecy in Early Christianity and in the Ancient Mediterranean World*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1983.
Bailey, James L., and Lyle D. Vander Broek. *Literary Forms in the New Testament*. WJK, 1992.
Balch, David L. *Let Wives Be Submissive: The Domestic Code in 1 Peter.* SBLDS. Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1981.
Balch, David L., and Carolyn Osiek. *Families in the New Testament World: Household and House Churches*. WJK, 1997.
———, eds. *Early Christian Families in Context: An Interdisciplinary Dialogue*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005.
Bar-Kochva, Bezalel. *The Image of the Jews in Greek Literature: The Hellenistic Period*. Berkeley: University of California, 2009.
Bauckham, Richard, ed. *The Book of Acts in Its Palestinian Setting*. Vol. 4: *The Book of Acts in Its First Century Setting*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995.
Boyarin, Daniel. *A Radical Jew: Paul and the Politics of Identity*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994.
———. "Was Paul an 'Anti-Semite'? A Reading of Galatians 3–4." *USQR* 47 (1993): 47–80.
Branick, Vincent P. *Understanding Paul and His Letters*. New York: Paulist Press, 2009.
Breck, John. *The Shape of Biblical Language: Chiasmus in the Scriptures and Beyond*. Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1994.
Burns, Jasper. *Great Women of Imperial Rome: Mothers and Wives of the Caesars*. New York: Routledge, 2006.
Callahan, Dwight. *Embassy of Onesimus: The Letter of Paul to Philemon*. Valley Forge, PA: TPI, 1997.
Campbell, Douglas A. *The Deliverance of God: An Apocalyptic Rereading of Justification in Paul*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009.
Cohen, Shaye J. D. "The Significance of Yavneh: Pharisees, Rabbis, and the End of Jewish Sectarianism." *HUCA* (Hebrew Union College Annual) 55 (1984): 27–53.
Cohick, Lynn H. *Women in the World of the Earliest Christians: Illuminating Ancient Ways of Life*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2009.
Collins, Adela Yarbro. *Cosmology and Eschatology in Jewish and Christian Apocalypticism*. JSJSup 50. Leiden: Brill, 1996.
Collins, John J. *The Apocalyptic Imagination: An Introduction to the Jewish Matrix of Christianity*. New York: Crossroad, 1989.
Cotter, Wendy. "Women's Authority Roles in Paul's Churches: Countercultural or Conventional?" *NovT* 36 (1994): 350–72.
Crossan, John Dominic, and Jonathan L. Reed. *In Search of Paul: How Jesus' Apostle Opposed Rome's Empire with God's Kingdom: A New Vision of Paul's Words and World*. New York: Harper Collins, 2005.

Das, Andrew A. *Solving the Romans Debate*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006.
Daube, David. *Ancient Jewish Law*. Leiden: Brill, 1988.
Davies, W. D. *Introduction to the Pharisees*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1967.
———. *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism*. 4th ed. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980.
De La Torre, Miguel A. *Reading the Bible from the Margins*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2002.
Dewey, Arthur J., Roy Hoover, et al., trans. *The Authentic Letters of Paul: A New Reading of Paul's Rhetoric and Meaning*. Salem, OR: Polebridge Press, 2010.
Donfried, Karl P. "Chronology," in *Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary.* Edited by David Noel Freedman et al. New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 1992.
———, ed. *The Romans Debate: Revised and Expanded Edition*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2005.
Doty, W. G. *Letters in Primitive Christianity*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1973.
Dunn, James D. G. *Beginnings from Jerusalem: Christianity in the Making*. Vol. 2. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009.
———, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to St. Paul*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
———. *The New Perspective on Paul*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005.
———. *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998.
———. *The Theology of Paul's Letter to the Galatians*. NT Theology. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.
Elliott, Neil. *The Arrogance of Nations: Reading Romans in the Shadow of the Empire*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008.
———. *Liberating Paul: The Justice of God and the Politics of the Apostle*. Maryknoll: Orbis, 1994. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005.
———. *The Rhetoric of Romans: Argumentative Constraint and Strategy and Paul's Dialogue with Judaism*. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990.
Engberg-Pedersen, Troels, ed. *Paul beyond the Judaism/Hellenism Divide*. WJK, 2001.
———. *Paul and the Stoics*. WJK, 2000.
Esler, Philip F. *The First Christians in Their Social Worlds: Social Scientific Approaches to New Testament Interpretation*. London: Routledge, 1994.
Fee, Gordon D. *God's Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994.
———. *Pauline Christology: An Exegetical-Theological Study*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2007.
Feldman, Louis H. "Diaspora Synagogues." In *Sacred Realm*. Edited by S. Fine. Oxford: Oxford University Press; New York: Yeshiva University Museum, 1996.
Ferguson, Everett. *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*. 3rd ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003.
———. *Baptism in the Early Church: History, Theology, and Liturgy in the First Five Centuries*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009.

Finlan, Stephen. *The Apostle Paul and the Pauline Tradition*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2009.

Gamble, Harry Y. *Books and Readers in the Early Church: A History of Early Christian Texts*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995.

Gathercole, Simon J. *Where Is Boasting? Early Jewish Soteriology and Paul's Response in Romans 1–5*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002.

Gorman, Michael J. *Apostle of the Crucified Lord: A Theological Introduction to Paul and His Letters*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004.

———. *Reading Paul*. Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2008.

Gray, Patrick. *Opening Paul's Letters: A Reader's Guide to Genre and Interpretation*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2012.

Green, Joel B., ed. *Hearing the New Testament: Strategies for Interpretation*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010.

Greenlee, J. Harold. *The Text of the New Testament. From Manuscript to Modern Edition*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2008.

Grenholm, Cristina, and Daniel Patte, eds. *Reading Israel in Romans: Legitimacy and Plausibility of Divergent Interpretations*. TPI, 2000.

Gundry, Stanley N., and Michael F. Bird, eds. *Four Views on the Apostle Paul*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012.

Harding, Mark. *What Are They Saying about the Pastoral Epistles?* Mahwah, NJ: Paulist, 2001.

Harrill, J. A. *Slaves in the New Testament: Literary, Social and Moral Dimensions*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005.

Hay, David M., and E. Elizabeth Johnson, eds. *Pauline Theology*. Vol. 3: *Romans*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995.

Hays, Richard B. *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989.

———. *The Conversion of Imagination: Paul as Interpreter of Israel's Scripture*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005.

———. *The Faith of Jesus Christ: The Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1–4:11*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002.

Hedrick, Charles W., Jr. *Ancient History: Monuments and Documents*. New York: Wiley Blackwell, 2006.

Hedrick, Charles W., Jr., and Robert Hodgson, eds. *Nag Hammadi, Gnosticism, and Early Christianity*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1986.

Holmberg, Bengt. *Paul and Power: The Structure of Authority in the Primitive Church as Reflected in the Pauline Epistles*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980; Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2004.

Hooker, Morna. "Were There False Teachers at Colossae?" In *Christ and the Spirit in the NT*. Edited by Barnabas Lindars and Stephen Smalley. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,1973. Pages 315–31.

Horrell, David G. *An Introduction to the Study of Paul*. 2nd ed. London and New York: T&T Clark, 2006.

Horsley, Richard A. *Paul and the Roman Imperial Order*. TPI, 2004.

Hurtado, Larry W. *How on Earth Did Jesus Become God? Historical Questions about Earliest Devotion to Jesus*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005.

Jewett, Robert. *A Chronology of Paul's Life*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979.

———. "Paul, Shame, and Honor." In *Paul in the Greco-Roman World: A Handbook*. Edited by J. Paul Sampley. Harrisburg, PA: TPI, 2003. Pages 551–74.

Joubert, Stephan J., *Paul as Benefactor: Reciprocity, Strategy, and Theological Reflection in Paul's Collection*. WUNT II 124. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000.

Kamm, Antony. *The Romans: An Introduction*. 2nd ed. New York: Routledge, 2008.

Käsemann, Ernest. *Perspectives on Paul*. Translated by Margaret Kohl. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971.

Kim, Seyoon. *Christ and Caesar: The Gospel and the Roman Empire in the Writings of Paul and Luke*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008.

Lampe, Peter. *From Paul to Valentinus: Christians at Rome in the First Two Centuries*. Translated by Michael Steinhauser from second German ed. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003.

Longenecker, Bruce W. *Remember the Poor: Paul, Poverty, and the Greco-Roman World*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010.

Martin, Dale B. *The Corinthian Body*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995.

Martin, Ralph P. *Carmen Christi: Philippians ii. 5–11 in Recent Interpretation and in the Setting of Early Christian Worship*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1983.

Martin, Troy W. *By Philosophy and Empty Deceit: Colossians as Response to a Cynic Critique*. JSNTSup 118. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996.

McLean, Bradley Hudson. *Biblical Interpretation and Philosophical Hermeneutics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

Meeks, Wayne. *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul*. 2nd ed. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1983.

———. "The Man from Heaven in Paul's Letter to the Philippians." In *The Future of Early Christianity: Essays in Honor of Helmut Koester*. Edited by Birger Pearson. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991. Pages 329–36.

Meeks, Wayne, and John T. Fitzgerald, eds. 2nd ed. *The Writings of St. Paul*. A Norton Critical Edition. New York: Norton, 2007.

Meggitt, Justin J. *Paul, Poverty and Survival*. Studies of the New Testament and Its World. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998.

Moyise, Steve. *Evoking Scripture: Seeing the Old Testament in the New*. London: T&T Clark, 2008.

Murphy-O'Connor, Jerome. *Paul the Letter-Writer: His World, His Options, His Skills*. GNS 41. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1995.
———. *St. Paul's Corinth: Texts and Archaeology*. Expanded ed. GNS 6. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2002.
Nanos, Mark D., ed. *The Galatians Debate: Contemporary Issues in Rhetorical and Historical Interpretation*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002.
———. *The Mystery of Romans. The Jewish Context of Paul's Letter*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996.
Newsom, Carol A., Sharon H. Ringe, and Jacqueline E. Lapslely. *Women's Bible Commentary*. 3rd revised and updated ed. WJK, 2012.
Paddison, Angus. *Theological Hermeneutics and 1 Thessalonians*. SNTSMS 133. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
Pervo, Richard I. *Dating Acts between the Evangelists and the Apologists*. Santa Rosa, CA: Polebridge, 2006.
Phillips, Thomas E. *Paul, His Letters, and Acts*. Library of Pauline Studies. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2009.
Porter, Stanley E. *Early Christian Interpretation of the Scriptures of Israel: Investigations and Proposals*. JSNTSup 148. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997.
———, ed. *Handbook of Classical Rhetoric in the Hellenistic Period, 300 B.C.–A.D. 400*. Boston and Leiden: Brill, 2001.
———. *Idioms of the Greek New Testament*. 2nd edition. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994.
———, ed. *Paul and His Opponents*. Pauline Studies 2. Atlanta: SBL, 2005.
———, ed. *Paul in Acts*. Library of Pauline Studies. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2001.
———, ed. *The Paul of Acts: Essays in Literary Criticism, Rhetoric, and Theology*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999.
Porter, Stanley E., and Dennis L. Stamps, eds. *Rhetorical Criticism and the Bible*. London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002.
Powers, Daniel G. *Salvation through Participation: An Examination of the Notion of Believers' Corporate Unity with Christ in Early Christian Soteriology*. CBET 29. Leuven: Peeters, 2001.
Puskas, Charles B. *The Conclusion of Luke-Acts: The Significance of Acts 28:16-31*. Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2009.
———. *The Letters of Paul: An Introduction*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1993.
Puskas, Charles B., and David Crump. *An Introduction to the Gospels and Acts*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008.
Ramsay, William M. *St. Paul the Traveler and Roman Citizen*. 1897 ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1962.
Reasoner, Mark. *Romans in Full Circle: A History of Interpretation*. WJK, 2005.

———. *The "Strong" and "Weak" in Romans: Romans 14.1–15.13 in Context*. SNTSMS 103. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
Reddish, Mitchell G., ed. *Apocalyptic Literature: A Reader*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1995.
Richards, E. Randolph. *Paul and First-Century Letter Writing: Secretaries, Composition, and Collection*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2004.
Riesner, Rainer. *Paul's Early Period: Chronology, Mission Strategy, Theology*. Translated by Doug Stott. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998.
Roetzel, Calvin J. *Paul: A Jew on the Margins*. WJK, 2003.
———. *The Letters of Paul: Conversations in Context*. 5th ed. WJK, 2009.
———. *Paul: The Man and the Myth*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999.
Sampley, J. Paul, and Gerhard Krodel, eds. *The Deutero-Pauline Letters: Ephesians, Colossians, 2 Thessalonians, 1–2 Timothy, Titus*. Rev. ed. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993.
Sanders, E. P. *Jewish Law from Jesus to the Mishnah: Five Studies*. Harrisburg, PA: TPI, 1990.
———. *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religions*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977.
Sandmel, Samuel. *Judaism and Christian Beginnings*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1978.
———. "Parallelomania." *JBL* 81 (1962): 1–13.
Schmithals, Walter. *Gnosticism in Corinth: An Investigation of the Letters to the Corinthians*. Translated by John E. Steely. Nashville: Abingdon, 1971.
———. *Paul and the Gnostics*. Translated by John E. Steely. Nashville: Abingdon, 1972.
———. *The Theology of the First Christians*. Translated by O. C. Dean. WJK, 1997.
Schnelle, Udo. *Apostle Paul: His Life and Thought*. Translated by M. Eugene Boring. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2005.
———. *Theology of the New Testament*. Translated by M. Eugene Boring. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2009.
Scholer, David M., ed. *Social Distinctives of the Christians in the First Century: Pivotal Essays by E. A. Judge*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2007.
Schüssler Fiorenza, Elizabeth. *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Early Christian Beginnings*. New York: Crossroad, 1983.
Schweitzer, Albert. *The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle*. Translated by W. Montgomery from the 1931 German ed. New York: Macmillan, 1956.
Scott, Bernard Brandon. *Rediscovering the Apostle Paul*. Jesus Seminar Guides. Salem, OR: Polebridge, 2011.
Segovia, Fernando F. "Reading-Across: Intercultural Criticism and Textual Posture." In *Interpreting Beyond Borders*. Edited by Fernando F. Segovia. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000. Pages 59–83.

Shanks, Hershel, ed. *Christianity and Rabbinic Judaism: A Parallel History of Their Origins and Early Development*. Washington, DC: Biblical Archaeology Society, 1992.

Stark, Rodney. *The Rise of Christianity: A Sociologist Reconsiders History*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996.

Stegemann, Hartmut, ed. *The Library of Qumran: On the Essenes, Qumran, John the Baptist, and Jesus*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998.

Stegner, William R. "The Ancient Jewish Synagogue Homily." In *Greco-Roman Literature and the New Testament*. Edited by David E. Aune. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988. Pages 51–69.

———. "Rom 9:6-29—Midrash." *JSNT* 22 (1984): 37–52.

Stendahl, Kirster. *Paul among Jews and Gentiles*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976.

Stowers, Stanley Kent. *The Diatribe and Paul's Letter to the Romans*. SBLDS 57. Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1981.

———. *Letter Writing in Greco-Roman Antiquity*. LEC 5. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986.

Stirewalt, M. Luther. *Paul, the Letter Writer*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003.

Strack, Hermann L., and G. Stemberg. *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*. Translated by Markus Bockmuehl. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992.

Sugirtharajah, R. S., ed. *The Postcolonial Bible*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998.

Sumney, Jerry L. *Identifying Paul's Opponents*. JSNTSup 40. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990.

Tannehill, Robert C. "Participation in Christ: A Central Theme in Pauline Soteriology." In idem, *The Shape of the Gospel: New Testament Essays*. Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2007. Pages 223–37.

Taylor, Walter F. *Paul: Apostle to the Nations; An Introduction*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012.

Thompson, Michael B. *Clothed with Christ: The Example and Teaching of Jesus in Romans 12.1–15.13*. JSNTSup 59. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991.

Tilling, Chris. *Paul's Divine Christology*. WUNT II.323. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012.

Trobisch, David. *Paul's Letter Collection: Tracing the Origins*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994.

———. *The First Edition of the New Testament*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Trocmé, Etienne. *The Childhood of Christianity*. Translated by John Bowden. London: SCM Press, 1997.

Van Neste, Ray. *Cohesion and Structure in the Pastoral Epistles*, JSNTSup 280. London: T&T Clark, 2004.

Watson, Duane, ed. *Persuasive Artistry: Studies in New Testament Rhetoric in Honor of George A. Kennedy*. *JSNT* 50. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991.

———. *Paul, Judaism, and the Gentiles: Beyond the New Perspective*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007.

Wedderburn, Alexander J. M. *The Reasons for Romans*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991.

Weima, Jeffrey A. D. *Neglected Endings: The Significance of the Pauline Letter Closings*. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994.

Westerholm, Stephen. *Perspectives Old and New on Paul: The "Lutheran" Paul and His Critics*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004.

———, ed. *The Blackwell Companion to Paul*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011.

White, John L. *The Form and Function of the Body of the Greek Letter: A Study of the Letter-Body in the Non-Literary Papyri and in Paul the Apostle*. Missoula, MT: SBL, 1972.

———."The Structural Analysis of Philemon." SBLSP Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1971.

Wilson, Stephen O. *Luke and the Pastoral Epistles*. London: SPCK, 1979.

Winter, Bruce W. *After Paul Left Corinth: The Influence of Secular Ethics and Social Change*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001.

———. *Philo and Paul among the Sophists: Alexandrian and Corinthian Responses to a Julio-Claudian Movement*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002.

———. *Roman Wives, Roman Widows: The Appearance of New Women and the Pauline Communities*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003.

———. *Seek the Welfare of the City: Christians as Benefactors and Citizens*. First-Century Christians in the Graeco-Roman World. Edited by Andrew D. Clarke. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994.

Winter, Bruce W., and Andrew D. Clark, eds. *The Book of Acts in Its First Century Setting*. Vol. 1: *The Book of Acts in Its Ancient Literary Setting*. Edited by Bruce W. Winter. 5 vols. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1993.

Witherington, Ben, III. *New Testament Rhetoric: An Introductory Guide to the Art of Persuasion in and of the New Testament*. Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2009.

Wright, N. T. *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991.

———. *Paul in Fresh Perspective*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005.

Zetterholm, Magnus. *Approaches to Paul: A Student's Guide to Recent Scholarship*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009.

Index

Abraham
  as father, 12
  in Galatians, 137
  God's covenant with, 6–8
  justification of, 10
Achaia, 15, 238
Acts of the Apostles
  and Ephesians, 166
  and Galatians, 139–40
  and Pastoral Letters, 225, 231
  and Philippians, 193
  and Romans, 67
  and Thessalonian correspondence, 202–4
Acts of Paul and Thecla, xxi, 231, 236, 246
Agrippa II, 60
Alexander the Great, 20, 181, 201
amanuensis, 34, 154–55
anacolutha, 41–42, 102
angels, 150, 151–52
Antioch, 54, 139, 140
apocalypse (genre), 35, 215–16
Apollo, 151
Apollos, 94–95, 113
apology, 129–30, 137–38
apostles, 3n1, 121, 146–47, 162
apostrophe, 134
Apphia, 26, 34, 198
Aquila, 69, 91, 225
Aramaic, 13–14
Archippus, 34, 144, 179, 198
Aretas, 53–54
argument
  of Galatians, 127–28
  of Romans, 84–86
Aristarchus, 144
Aristotle, 41, 76, 109, 129, 196
asceticism
  at Colossae, 150–52
  and Pastoral Letters, 235
  at Philippi, 185
Athens, 101, 203–4
audience
  of 1 Corinthians, 108
  of Ephesians, 159
  of Romans, 69–71
  of Thessalonian correspondence, 212
Augustine, xxi, 67, 83n37
Augustus (Caesar), 21, 25, 186, 181
authenticity
  of Colossians, 144–49
  of Ephesians, 160–62
  of Pastoral Letters, 222
  of Thessalonian correspondence, 206–11
  of 2 Thessalonians, 204
authority
  and Galatians, 129–30
  and letters, 34
  of Paul, 112, 127
  at Thessalonica, 206
authorship
  of Colossians, 144–49
  of Ephesians, 160–62
  of Pastoral Letters, 220–33
  of Thessalonian correspondence, 206–11
autobiography, 35
Avemarie, Friedrich, 82–84

baptism, 146, 147, 173
Barnabas, 140

Barth, Karl, 68
Basil of Cappadocia, 159
Baur, F. C., 121
Betz, Hans Dieter, 46n21, 67n14, 122, 127–29
bishop, 229, 236–37
boasting, 100, 183
Bockmuehl, Markus, 6n5, 11n15
Body
  cosmic, 146, 184
  of Christ (church), 146, 164, 229
  Paul's own, 126
Bonhoeffer, Dietrich, 180
Bousset, Wilhelm, 81
Boyarin, Daniel, 11n17, 132n25
Brown, Alexandra, 111n42
Burrus, Afranius, 63n29, 64

Caesar, 26, 54, 72, 181n2, 193
  and Jesus Christ, 24
  Paul's appeal to, 60, 61
Caesarea, 56
  and Colossians, 145
  and Pastoral Letters, 225
  Paul at, 60, 61
  and Philippians, 192–94
Caligula, Gaius, 54
call narrative, 52–53
Calvin, John, 67
catechesis, 35
Cenchrea, 68, 89, 90
Cephas. *See* Peter
Chester Beatty Papyrus, 33, 222
Chloe, 26, 92, 102
Christ, 11–12; *see also* Jesus Christ
Christology
  in Colossians, 146
  in Ephesians, 162
  and 2 Thessalonians, 210
Chrysostom, John, 48
church
  at Colossae, 149–54
  at Corinth, 91–100
  and Ephesians, 161
  and Pastoral Letters, 234
  Paul on, 46–48, 220, 229–33
  at Philippi, 182
  at Rome, 68–71
  at Thessalonica, 202–6
church discipline, 220
Cicero, 34, 196
  and Galatians, 130–31
  on rhetoric, 41, 76, 109, 129
Cilicia, 54
circumcision, 6–7
  and baptism, 147
  and Galatians, 121
  and Jerusalem conference, 140
  and new perspective on Paul, 81–84
  and Philippians, 183
citizenship, 23, 26, 186, 230, 238
Classen, C. Joachim, 128
Claudius, 50, 69
1 Clement, 222
Clement of Alexandria, 160, 207
Clement of Rome, 67, 160, 226
collection (for poor), 106, 107, 113, 116n54, 131n21
Collins, Raymond F., 227
Colossae, 149–54
Colossians, 143–44, 177–78
  authorship of, 144–49
  and Ephesians, 143, 159, 161, 162–63, 172
  genre of, 154–55
  and prison epistles, 179
  and rhetoric, 155–58
  structure of, 155–58
conclusio, 73, 79–80, 135
Conference at Jerusalem, 57–59, 139–40
confessions, 237
confirmatio, 80
consumption, 87
context
  of Pastoral Letters, 233–38
  of Romans, 86–87
conversion, 52–53

Corinth, 56
  churches at, 91–100
  city of, 89–90
  and Pastoral Letters, 225
  Paul's visits to, 100–107, 224
  and Romans, 68
Corinthian correspondence, 89, 100–107, 119–20
  and Colossians, 147
  and Pastoral Letters, 236
  See also 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians
1 Corinthians, 94–99
  and Corinthian correspondence, 101, 102
  and Ephesians, 164
  genre of, 107–9
  on Israel, 46
  as occasional, 28
  and resurrection, 97
  and Romans, 75
  structure of, 110–13
2 Corinthians, 99–100
  and Corinthian correspondence, 102, 104–7, 114
  and Ephesians, 165
  and Galatians, 141
  genre of, 113–14
  and Philippians, 189
  structure of, 115–19
cosenders of letters, 32, 34, 144, 154, 179, 192, 204
Cosgrove, Charles, 186
covenant, 5–6
  Abrahamic, 6–8, 10, 45, 66, 126, 136–38, 141
  Davidic, 11–12
  Mosaic, 5n5, 6–11, 45, 82, 123
creeds, 237
Crete, 63, 225, 238
Crispus, 91, 95, 101
crucifixion, 38, 53, 131n22

Dalmatia, 226
Damascus, 53–54
Das, A. Andrew, 70
date
  of Galatians, 138–42
  of Pastoral Letters, 239
  of Philippians, 192–94
  of Thessalonian correspondence, 214
David, 11–12
Davies, W. D., 81, 82
Day of Atonement, 62
deacons, 230, 236–37, 241
Deissmann, Adolf, 29n3, 81
deliberative rhetoric
  1 Corinthians as, 108–9
  and 2 Corinthians, 113
  Philemon as, 197
Delphi, 49, 91
Demas, 144
Demiurge, 172
Demosthenes, 108, 129
Deuteronomy, 134
diatribe, 17, 39–40, 70, 85
Didache, 239
dietary laws, 81–84
Dionysios Halikarnasseus, 21
divisiveness, 87
Dodd, C. H., 158
doxology, 32, 73
dualism, 102
Dunn, James D. G., 81–84, 156n29, 177n53

Eastman, Susan, 138, 189
Ebionites, 121, 234
education (of Paul), 16
elders, 229–30, 236–37
Elliott, Neil, 70, 72
Epaphras, 144, 147, 149
Epaphroditus, 179, 192–94, 198
Ephesians, 158–59, 177–78
  and Acts, 166
  audience of, 159
  authorship of, 160–62

and Colossians, 143, 162–63
and 1 Corinthians, 109, 164
and 2 Corinthians, 165
and Galatians, 165
genre of, 172–74
and gnosticism, 169–72
and Luke, 166
and 1 Peter, 167
and Philippians, 165
and prison epistles, 179
and Qumran, 167–69
and rhetoric, 174–77
and Romans, 164
structure of, 175–77
and 1 Thessalonians, 165
Ephesus, 56, 149
and Colossians, 145
and 2 Corinthians, 105, 106–7
and Ephesians, 158–59
and Galatians, 139, 141
and Pastoral Letters, 223, 225, 238
and Philippians, 192–94
Timothy at, 224
and 2 Timothy, 238
Epictetus, 38, 39, 40, 86
Epicureans, 18, 19
Epicurus, 34, 74, 109
epideictic oratory
Colossians as, 155
and Ephesians, 174–75
and Philippians, 191–92
Romans as, 75–76
Epimenides, 20
Epiphanius, 205
Erasmus, 160, 161
Erastus, 91, 104
eschatology, 32, 240
and Philippians, 185
and Thessalonian correspondence, 212–13
and 2 Thessalonians, 207–9
realized, 97, 169, 171, 185
Euodia, 26, 179
Eusebius, 226
execution (of Paul), 23, 63
exhortatio, 80; *see also* Parenesis
exordium, 79–80, 133

factions, 94–95, 102
Fair Havens, 62
faith, 10
in Galatians, 137
priority of, 6, 10–11
in Romans, 81–84
in 1 Timothy, 245
and works, 125
false teachers
at Colossae, 149–54
in Pastoral Letters, 234–36
at Philippi, 182–86
Fee, Gordon, 12n18, 211
Felix, 60, 61
Festus, 60
Festus, Porcius, 61
figures of speech, 37
form, 127–30

Gaius, 91, 95
Galatia, 135–42
Galatians, 121
and 1 Corinthians, 108
and Ephesians, 165
form of, 127–30
on Israel, 46
occasion of, 122–26
and Pastoral Letters, 236
purpose of, 7
and Romans, 75
situation of, 135–38
Torah observance in, 11
Gallio, 56, 91, 101
Gallio Inscription, 49–51, 91
Gathercole, Simon, 82–84
genre
of Colossians, 154–55
of Ephesians, 172–74
of Philemon, 196
of Thessalonian correspondence, 214

Gentiles
at Colossae, 149
and Davidic covenant, 12
in Galatians, 135–38
and Israel, 46
and law, 135, 141–42
and new perspective on Paul, 82
Paul's mission to, 7n10, 52
at Philippi, 182, 183
and Qumran, 169
in Roman church, 69–71
salvation of, 121
and Torah, 10, 124–26
Gnosticism, 52–53
and Christ hymn, 187–88
at Colossae, 152–53
at Corinth, 94, 96–99
and Ephesians, 169–72
and Pastoral Letters, 234–35
at Philippi, 184–86
and 2 Thessalonians, 210
at Thessalonica, 205–6
God
and the covenants, 6–11, 47, 82, 137
as divine patron, 21n41, 93n9
in Ephesians, 164–66, 172
in Galatians, 123, 132, 136–37
in Romans, xxiv, 37, 77, 81–83
in Titus, 228–29, 241n42
God-fearers, 7n9, 125
Gorman, Michael, 131n22, 189
gospel
in Colossians, 146–47
and Corinthian correspondence, 103
and Galatians, 133–34, 136–37, 137–38
in Romans, 80, 82, 84
and Roman Empire, 72
and 2 Timothy, 248
gospels, 72
government, 23, 232
grace, 80–84, 124–25, 228–29
Habakkuk, 134
Hammadi, Nag, 152, 160, 169
Hays, Richard B., 8n12, 43, 97, 132n23
Hebrew, 13–14
Hebrews, 45, 66, 175
Hellenism, 14–21, 35, 38–39, 41n14, 115, 154, 227–29, 232
Hellerman, Joseph, 188
Hendrix, Holland, 173
Hester, James D., 128
Hieropolis, 149
Hillel, 14
Holy Spirit, 82–83, 137–38
homily, 173
Horrell, David, 210
house, 93–94
Hultgren, Arland, 77n23
humanity, 87
hymn, 35, 143, 237
in Colossians, 154, 155
in Ephesians, 172–73
in Philippians, 186–89
hyperbole, 38

idioms, 42
idleness, 206
idolatry, 15, 22–23, 126, 201
Ignatius of Antioch
on Colossians, 144, 149
on Ephesians, 160
on Pastoral Letters, 222, 238, 239
and Romans, 67
Illyricum, 26n52, 226
immorality, 15, 98
indignation, 134
indulgences, 124
integrity, 104–7
Irenaeus
on Ephesians, 160
and Pastoral Letters, 223
on post-resurrection appearances, 52–53
on 2 Thessalonians, 207
and Thessalonica, 205

irony, 38
Isocrates, 76, 108, 109, 129
Israel, 4–8, 12–13, 46–47, 77–78, 80, 123–24, 137

James (letter), 40, 45–46, 66–67
James (person), 10, 140
Jerusalem, 12, 53–61, 71, 224
Jesus Christ
  Colossians on, 146
  and David, 11–12
  and factions at Corinth, 94–95
  hymn of, 186–89
  merits of, 12–13
  and Pastoral Letters, 228–29, 234
  and Philippians, 183
  post-resurrection appearances of, 52–53
  and Roman Empire, 24, 72, 181
  Sittler on, 143
  2 Thessalonians on, 210–11
  union with, 81, 83–84, 232
Jewett, Robert, 56n17, 64n32, 87, 136n31, 205n11
Johnson, Luke Timothy, 227, 231, 252
Judaism, 4–10, 80–82, 125, 141, 183
  at Colossae, 149, 151–53
  in Corinth, 91, 104
  and Galatians, 121, 122, 141–42
  and Pastoral Letters, 234
  and Paul, 11, 133–34
  at Philippi, 183–84
  and Roman Empire, 21
  in Rome, 69–71, 80–84
  at Thessalonica, 201, 203, 205
Judeans, 4; *see also* Judaism
judgment, divine, 7n10, 35
judicial rhetoric, 128–29, 133
Julius (Caesar), 89
Junia, 26
justice, 72
justification, 81–84, 124
Justus, Titius, 101

Kaminsky, Joel S., 7n10
kerygma, 36, 113, 189
King, Martin Luther, Jr., 180
knowledge, 184
Knox, John, 51n4, 174, 195–96, 198
Koine Greek, 20–21
Kuula, Kari, 124

Lampe, Peter, 68n7
Laodicea, 149, 154, 159
Latin, 26
law, 134
  and Abrahamic covenant, 6–8
  and Galatians, 121
  and Gentiles, 122–23, 135
  observance of, 141–42, 183
  and Pastoral Letters, 234
  and Paul, 4
  works of, 81–84
  See also Torah
Lechaeum, 90
legalism, 80–84, 124
letter
  in antiquity, 29–32
  Colossians as, 155
  and early Christians, 33–43
  Ephesians as, 172–74
  and New Testament, 28, 30, 32
  Philemon as, 194–95
  Philippians as, 189–91
  and Thessalonian correspondence, 213–15
libertinism, 185, 205–6, 215
Lincoln, Abraham, 76
lists, 35, 232
literary forms, 35
literature, 19–20
litotes, 39
liturgy, 173
Lohmeyer, Ernst, 186
Lord's Supper, 93, 94
love, 198
Luke
  in Colossians, 144
  and Ephesians, 166

and Pastoral Letters, 231
on Paul, 49
Luther, Martin
on Ephesians, 158
on Galatians, 121, 123–25
and Romans, 67, 83
Lydia of Thyatira, 26
Lysias, 76

MacDonald, Dennis R., 235
Macedonia, 15
and 2 Corinthians, 105, 106–7
and Pastoral Letters, 238
Paul at, 224
and Philippi, 181
and Thessalonica, 201
Timothy in, 104
Malta, 63
Marcion, xxi, 121
on Colossians, 144
on Ephesians, 159, 160
and Pastoral Letters, 220–21, 222, 235, 239
and Romans, 67
on 2 Thessalonians, 207
Mark, 144
marriage, 25, 171
Martin, Ralph, 186–87
Martyr, Justin, 40, 128, 144
Matthew, 67
meiosis, 38–39
Melanchthon, Philip, 67, 128
Melchizedek, 7
Menander, 20
mercy, 72
mercy seat, 45
merits
of fathers, 4, 12–13
Luther on, 124
messiah, 11–12
metaphor, 37
midrash, 14n23
Miletus, 225
Milton, John, 108
ministry, 146, 147
mission to Gentiles, 54–57, 58, 60
Muratorian Fragment, 63, 252
and Pastoral Letters, 222, 241
on 2 Thessalonians, 207
Murphy-O'Connor, Jerome, 17n31, 76n21, 90n4, 148n10, 174n50, 195n31, 228n16
Musonius Rufus, 39
Myra of Lycia, 61
mystery cult, 83, 151

Nabatea, 53
Nanos, Mark, 77–78, 125–27
narratio, 133–34
Nero, 21, 64–65, 72, 186
New Testament
letters in, 28, 30, 32
and Pauline Letters, 44–46
and Romans, 66–67
and Septuagint, 43
Nicolaitans, 205
Nicopolis, 225
Norden, Eduard, 186

occasion
of Galatians, 122–26
of Philemon, 195–96
of Romans, 68
Octavia, Claudia, 64
O'Day, Gail, 93
Onesimus, 144, 154, 179, 195–96, 198
Onesiphorous, 238
opponents
of cross, 185
of Paul, 136–38
at Philippi, 182–86
oppression, 204
Origen, 45n19, 71n11, 83n37, 144, 153n24, 159

paradox, 38

paraenesis, 17, 40, 134–35
parallelism, 36–37
parousia, 185, 207–8; *see also* eschatology
Pastoral Letters, 219–20, 251–53
  authorship of, 220–33
  historical settings of, 233–38
  number of, 241–42
  order of, 240–41
  structure of, 242–51
  See also 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus
pathos: in Galatians, 133
Paul
  as apostle, xxi, 3n1, 146–47
  as author, 28–29, 32, 192–94, 206–11, 220–33
  and Colossians, 144–49
  conversion of, 52–53
  and Corinth, 94–95, 99–107, 118–19
  and Ephesus, 159, 163, 172, 174
  execution of, 23, 63
  in Galatia, 139–42
  and Hellenism, 14–21
  at Jerusalem, 53–54, 57–59, 60–61
  Jewish heritage of, 3–5
  and Latin, 26
  life of, 49–51, 64–65
  mission activity of, 54–57
  and Mosaic covenant, 8–11
  new perspective on, 80–84, 123
  opponents of, 99–100, 114, 153–54, 182–86
  Pastoral Letters of, 219–20, 242
  and Philemon, 194–96, 198
  and Philippi, 181–82, 189–91
  Prison Letters of, 179–80
  and Rome, 21–26, 61–63, 71–72
  and Thessalonica, 200, 202–5, 214–17
Pauline letters, 44–48; *see also particular letters*
Pax Romana, 72
Peloponnesus, 90
penance, 124
perfection, 183–85
Pericles, 76
Perkins, Pheme, 187, 205n12
persecution, 212–13
Pervo, Richard, 8n11, 23n45, 52, 59n23, 167
Peter, 94–95, 113, 140
1 Peter
  and Ephesians, 167, 173
  and Pauline letters, 44
  and Romans, 66
2 Peter, 45, 240
Pharisees, 4, 8
Philemon (book), 179–80, 194–95, 199
  and Colossians, 144–45
  genre of, 196
  as letter, 30
  occasion of, 195–96
  as occasional, 28
  and Philippians, 192–94
  structure of, 196–98
Philemon (person), 34, 144
Philip II of Macedon, 181, 201
Philippi
  church at, 182
  city of, 181
  opponents at, 182–86
  Paul at, 192–94
Philippians, 179–80, 199
  date of, 192–94
  and Ephesians, 165
  interpretation of, 186–89
  as letter, 189–91
  structure of, 191–92
  and 2 Thessalonians, 212
Philo, 18
philosophy, 18–19, 150–51
Phoebe, 25–26
Phrygia, 149

piety, 72
Plato, 18, 76, 109, 129–30
Platonism, 18
Pliny the Younger, 196, 198
Plutarch, 18, 34, 39, 74, 109
poem, 186–89
Polycarp
  on Ephesians, 160
  and Pastoral Letters, 220, 222
  on Philippians, 190, 212
  on 2 Thessalonians, 207
power
  of God or Christ, xxiii, 80, 111, 118
  or *virtus*, 72
powers, cosmic, 135, 150, 154, 170
praetorian guard, 192
praetorium, 26
prescript, 133
Prisca, 26
Priscilla, 69, 91, 225
Prison Letters, 143, 179, 199
probatio, 80, 134
prophetic denouncements, 36
prophets, 162
propositio, 134
protreptic rhetoric, 40, 75, 84–85, 128

Quintilian, 41, 76, 109, 196
Qumran, 152, 167–69
Qur'an, 28

reconciliation
  divine, 161
  human, 198
Reformation, 121
resurrection, 9–10, 19, 53, 81–82, 97, 112, 184, 234–35
Revelation, 46
rhetoric
  and Christian letters, 36–43
  and Colossians, 155–58
  and 1 Corinthians, 108–13
  and Ephesians, 174–77
  Paul's use of, 16–18
  and Romans, 74–80
  and Thessalonian correspondence, 215–16
rhetorical questions, 38
righteousness, 7, 72, 76, 80–84, 183
Roman Empire, 21–26, 72, 126
Romans, 66–68, 80–88
  and baptism, 147
  and 1 Corinthians, 107
  and Davidic covenant, 12
  and diatribe, 40
  and Ephesians, 164
  and Galatians, 141
  genre of, 74
  integrity of, 73
  on Israel, 46
  as letter, 30, 34
  occasion of, 28–29, 68
  and 1 Peter, 44
  purpose of, 71–73
  rhetorical structure of, 74–80
  Torah observance in, 11
Rome
  church at, 68–71
  and Colossians, 145
  journey to, 61–63
  and Pastoral Letters, 223, 225
  Paul in, 26n52
  and Philippians, 192–94
Rufus, Musonius, 15n26, 17n30, 39, 86

Saarinen, Risto, 221–22
Sabbath observance, 81–84
salvation, 136–37, 143, 145
Sanders, E. P., 80–84
Sanhedrin, 60
sarcasm, 38, 105
Scripture, 14, 18, 43, 48, 134
self-commendation, 105
Seneca, 34, 64, 72, 86
  and diatribe, 39

and rhetorical questions, 38
and Romans, 74
Septuagint, 13–14, 43
sermon, 41
sexual immorality, 98, 205–6
Siculus, Calpurnius, 72, 186
Silas, 91, 203–4
Silvanus. *See* Silas
simile, 37
sin, 83
Sittler, Joseph, 143
situation, role-playing, 135–38
slavery, 195–96
social ethics, 172, 230–31, 237–38
Socrates, 129
solidarity, 74–75
sophistry, 98
Sophocles, 19
Spain, 63, 69, 71, 226
speeches, 41
Stephanus, 92, 95, 112–13
Stoicism, 40, 102
Stoics, 19
structure
of Ephesians, 175–77
of Pastoral Letters, 242–51
of Philemon, 196–98
of Philippians, 191–92
of 1 Thessalonians, 216
of 2 Thessalonians, 216
style
of Christian letters, 36–43
of Ephesians, 160–61
of Pastoral Letters, 221, 228
Suetonius, 69
synergism, 124–25
Syntyche, 26, 179
Syria, 54, 56

Tarsus, 54
Tatian of Syria, 222
Teles Bion, 39, 86
Tertullian, 160, 207, 220
thanksgiving, 31–32, 127
Thecla, 231, 235–36, 246n49
themes
in Ephesians, 162–72
key Pauline, 145, 160
Thessalonian correspondence, 200, 211–14, 216
1 Thessalonians, 200, 202–4, 216–17
audience of, 212
authenticity of, 206
and Ephesians, 165–66
and Galatians, 141
structure of, 216
and 2 Thessalonians, 206, 209–11, 212–13
2 Thessalonians, 200, 216–17
audience of, 212
authenticity of, 204, 206
and Colossians, 144
and Ephesians, 161
and 1 Thessalonians, 206, 212–13
Thessalonica, 200–206
Thucydides, 76
Tiberius, 54
Timothy, 91
in Colossians, 144
and Corinth, 104
as office holder, 230
and Pastoral Letters, 238
and Paul, 219–20, 223
at Philippi, 182
and Philippians, 192–94
and Prison Letters, 179
and Thessalonians, 203–4
1 Timothy, 251–53
on church life, 234
date of, 239
and Ebionites, 234
and false teachers, 234
genre of, 239
structure of, 245–48
2 Timothy, 251–53
on church life, 234

date of, 239
genre of, 239–40
structure of, 248–51
Titus (book)
and Ebionites, 234
genre of, 239
and Paul, 219–20, 223
structure of, 242–44
Titus (person), 105, 106, 251–53
Torah, xxii, 4n4, 7–11, 13–16, 70, 82, 124–26, 132, 138, 141
Troas, 225
Trophimus, 225
Tychicus, 144, 154, 179

union with Christ, *see* Jesus Christ, union with

Via Egnatia, 181, 201
Virgil, 185
vocabulary
of Colossians, 145
of Ephesians, 160–61, 169, 171
of Pastoral Letters, 221, 226
and 2 Thessalonians, 207, 208–9

Wansink, Craig S., 198
Weiss, Johannes, 187
Wesley, John, 67–68
Winter, Bruce W., 98–99, 126
wisdom, 18, 95, 152n22, 188n17
Witherington, Ben, 191, 193, 198, 211n25
women, 25–26, 182, 235–37, 246n49
works, 6, 10, 45–46, 81–84, 124–25, 131n22, 183, 230
worship, 25, 35, 173
Wright, N. T., 7n8, 69n8, 77–78, 81
Wuellner, Wilhelm, 41, 93

Žižek, Slavoj, xxii n3, 111n42